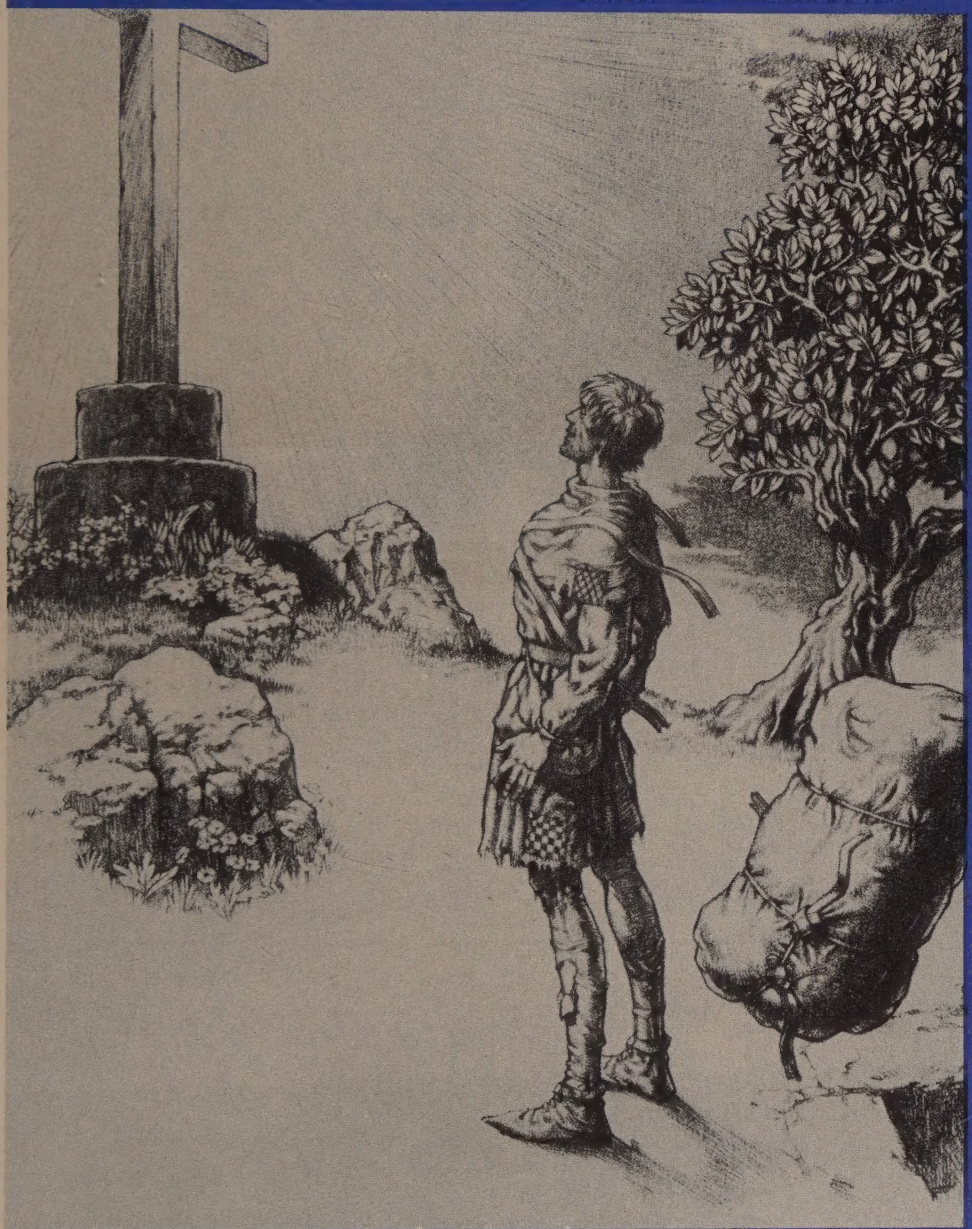
JANUARY-MARCH 1952

Crossroads

SUCCESSOR TO THE WESTMINSTER ADULT BIBLE CLASS



A Study and Program Magazine for Adults

VOLUME 2 : NUMBER 2

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SUCCESSOR TO THE WESTMINSTER ADULT BIBLE CLASS

A STUDY AND PROGRAM MAGAZINE FOR ADULTS

"Books in Review" is a new feature of our magazine, beginning with this issue. Through brief reports we shall call your attention to books that relate to Christian faith and experience. It was long ago observed that "of making many books there is no end," and this condition prevails in the religious field to an overwhelming degree. If we can direct you toward what is *good,* and away from what—in our reviewers' opinions—is the opposite, we may render you a helpful service. We do not have the space for long reviews, but we can indicate in a few hundred words whether your direction should be "toward" or "away from" the particular volume.

Christian loses his burden at the foot of the Cross. This scene from *The Pilgrim's Progress* is depicted on our cover this quarter, because John Bunyan's classic is a "Book for Christian Study." The drawing is by Robert Lawson, popular American artist, and it is taken from his illustrated edition of the Bedford Baptist's great allegory. Other drawings from the same edition are found on pages 73 and 74, where the book is outlined for study.

January 1, for

January—March, 1952

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CROSSROADS is published quarterly by the Publication Division of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1009 Sloan St., Crawfordsville, Ind. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Crawfordsville, Ind., under the Act of March 3, 1879. School subscriptions, two or more to one address, $1.40 a year, 35 cents a quarter each. Single subscription, $1.75 a year.

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Editorial offices, Witherspoon Building, Walnut and Juniper Streets, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

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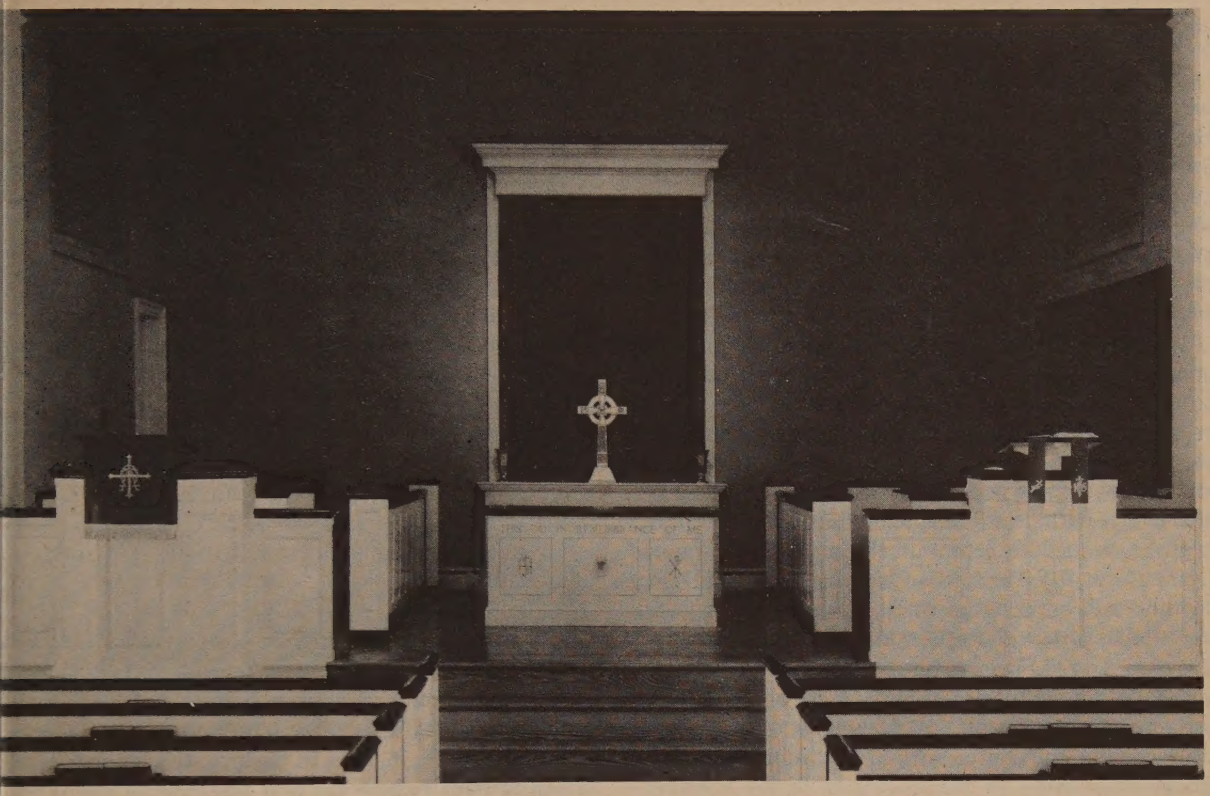

THE CHANCEL OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE COVENANT, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE. GORDON R. CONNING, MINISTER

The Beauty of God's House

By Gordon R. Conning

AT THE entrance to the twelfth century church at Boldre, Hampshire, England, the worshiper reads this inscription:

"You enter this church, not as a stranger, but as a guest of God. He is your Heavenly Father. Come, then, with joy in your heart and thanks on your lips, offering him your love and service. Be grateful to the strong and loyal men and women and children who in the name of God builded this place of worship, and to all who have beautified and hallowed it with their prayers and praises. May all who love this home of faith find the inspiration of their labor, and rejoice in the power and love of God, that his blessing may rest on you, both in your going out and your coming in."

The Boldre church, which I have never seen, is probably built of solid stone without and within, and well able to last at least another eight centuries. But its greeting to the worshiper reminds us that every church building means something more than its wood, stone, and metal, or its size, shape, and architectural style; for it was erected by the devotion and sacrifice of believers in Christ, as a place where they might worship and meet with God in Christ's name. Therefore, even if a church appears ugly or in poor taste, we should be aware of its other meaning as a place of Christian worship. It is rich for its worshipers in the beauty of holiness, prayer, praise, and blessing.

And yet, when every allowance has been made for sincerity, the house of God ought also to be beautiful. We remember that when Solomon built the Temple on Mt. Zion, it was its artistry and craftsmanship that expressed the devotion of king and people and set a standard for worthy sanctuaries. When the psalmist said, "Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary," he was aware of the spiritual realities, because they were also material realities. The appearance and atmosphere of the place where we worship God directly affect the value of that worship for us.

Our Architectural Heritage

We possess today a rich tradition in Christian architecture. Among ancient pre-Christian peoples, the Egyptians were the greatest builders of all, using wall, lintel, and pillar to create stupendous temples to preposterous gods. Under Greek genuis these things were shaped into matchless temples like the Parthenon. The matter-of-fact Romans added the round arch to build the massive storeyed and vaulted structures of their empire.

When the Christian Church was born, quietly and unobtrusively, it did not begin by building churches, but by changing lives and creating the fellowship of believers. For the Lord had said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." These living churches met in private homes or existing buildings: for example, the church in Ephesus met for a time in the school of Tyrannus (*Acts 19:9, 10*). When the Christians did build, they did not follow the form of the pagan temples, with their associations. Rather, they patterned their churches after the Roman basilicas, or public buildings, where the public affairs of the community were carried on and many people could assemble. The hall with aisles became the church with aisles, familiar to us all today.

Yet it was not in Rome or the West, but in the East, that the first distinctively Christian style of architecture developed. Constantine, first Roman emperor to accept Christianity, moved the imperial capital to Byzantium on the Bosporus, and the imperial Christian churches of the fourth century are the first in what is known as the Byzantine style. These Eastern builders solved the problem of roofing a rectangular area with the dome, and by this achievement and the use of columns and arches created the first great Christian churches, so suitable for worship that they have inspired Christian builders down to our day.

Western Europe, then entering its "time of troubles," turned sometimes to these Eastern models when rare opportunities came to build fine churches. But gradually the isolated West developed its own preferred style—generally massive and fortresslike, with round arches and crudely ornamented doorways—called Romanesque. This, however, varied in different localities. It was gifted Norman conquerors who carried to England, after 1066, their knowledge of architecture; this, in turn, when Anglicized, brought the Romanesque to its highest form in the great Norman abbeys and cathedrals of Northern France and England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The Gothic Church

But the glory of the Middle Ages was the Gothic church. "Gothic" means barbaric, as opposed to classical. It was a term bestowed by the next age, the Renaissance, which was contemptuous of these buildings which soared heavenward with clustered columns, pointed arches, and spires. To the building of a great cathedral like Chartres the guilds made their contributions of wealth and work, in order that Mary, Queen of Heaven, might have a fitting place to hold court for her worshipers. Doorways thronged with sculptured saints, and windows were bright with stained-glass stories.

By the fifteenth century most people were eager to take up the new ideas and forms of the Renaissance, in which Graeco-Roman culture was revived. The discovery about 1542 of a manuscript by Vitruvius, a Roman architect, led Italian builders to re-create what they understood to be the old Graeco-Roman style. Churches were built in this manner, such as the great new edifice called St. Peter's, in Rome, designed by Bramante and Michelangelo. This style moved northward, along with other Renaissance influences. Men thought its correct dignity and grace suited the "modern" scientific era much better than did the Gothic of man's childlike belief.

After the Reformation

When our forefathers of the Reformation worshiped, they met not only in private homes, but also in the Gothic churches they had inherited from medieval devotion—as St. Pierre's in Geneva, the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam (where the first assembly of the World Council of Churches worshiped in 1948), and St. Giles in Edinburgh. They continued to build churches in this familiar Gothic style for some time. But toward the end of the seventeenth century, Protestant Christopher Wren designed churches in the Renaissance style, although he kept the Gothic spire, treating it in the new classical manner.

It was this style which crossed the Atlantic and influenced the architecture of the churches and meeting houses that were built in the American colonies. It is interesting that the remarkable uniformity and excellence of what we call "Colonial" architecture is largely explained by the widespread use of handbooks on architecture, written by master designers for master carpenters and masons. Doubtless these craftsmen, in turn, worked closely in building with ministers and laymen of good taste. Those early American church buildings, so appropriate for evangelical worship, are the glory of our American Protestant tradition. The founders of our nation who worshiped in those churches knew what and why they believed. Their mature and confident faith is matched in the beautiful simplicity of their buildings.

From 1810 to 1910 our nation grew in population from 7,239,881 to an incredible 91,972,266. Thousands of new towns and cities sprang up, needing thousands of new churches. But we are not so well satisfied with these nineteenth century sanctuaries which fill our land as with the few which the poorer eighteenth century has left us. We say that many of them are in bad taste, that their style is incorrect and overdone, that they have not stood the test of time. For example, in old

CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN

New Castle, Delaware, a Presbyterian church, built in 1707 through the efforts of Francis Makemie, stood for ninety-six years completely overshadowed by a pompous Gothic edifice, which, in the day of its building (1854), must have been thought a thing of beauty. In 1950, however, the "Gothic monstrosity" was demolished, and the whole Presbyterian Church acclaims the faithful restoration of Makemie's historic meeting-house.

Some Guiding Principles

Why are we today more concerned about the beauty of God's house in terms of "better" architecture? Is it because, as some say, Protestantism has lost the substance of its faith and is substituting this concern for architecture, furniture, music, and liturgy? I think not, though in some cases this may be true. Is it because, at the middle of this century, we are accepting our national responsibility of being in a new sense the heirs, as well as champions, of the fine things of the Christian past? There is some truth in this, of course. Or is it because our generation stands closer to the realities of Christian faith that gave expression to these types of architecture originally—that we are actually closer to Makemie, Calvin, the nameless builders of Boldre Church, and true believers all the way back to Pentecost? I like to believe, and do believe, that this last is the real reason.

We are seeing our old buildings with new eyes, both critically and appreciatively. When we build, we have a better understanding of what a Protestant church ought to be. We are no longer content with banks of organ pipes or an assortment of memorial tablets in the central place of the house of worship. Nor are we entirely satisfied to look at a blank wall. Do not misunderstand me; I am not campaigning either for the divided chancel or for the central pulpit. There are good reasons why we should have the Communion Table at the center of our chancel, with a lectern for reading the Word of God on one side and the pulpit on the other. There are also good arguments in favor of having at the center the pulpit from which the Word of God is expounded. The important matter is that we relate these things to our faith and understand why we build as we do.

Like the apostolic Christians, we do not begin a church with the building and its furniture, but with a faith and a fellowship. We are first a company of believers, joined to Jesus Christ our Lord by faith and to one another by him. When we make a place for corporate worship, we do it with thought and devotion. We choose the style, the arrangement of furniture, even the colors, to express our faith and aid our worship, believing that there was never a more significant time to build for God than now. We also realize that the building is little more than the shell of the true Church, for the true Church is the fellowship of Christ's believers. No amount of decorations or artistry can be a substitute for that.

When it comes to remodeling an older building in which we believe mistakes have been made, we are under obligation to the fellowship to try to correct them, as we trust that others will later on try to correct our mistakes. The two principles that must guide us are, again: Does it express what we believe, and does it aid our corporate worship? There are many Presbyterian churches in our land that need to be tested by these principles. Do the central organ pipes express what we believe? Do the poor acoustics, the glare, the inadequate lighting, the melancholy colors, aid in our corporate worship? Our faith is not in any way akin to drabness or cheap show. In making a change, we must expect that it will do something to make the worshipers aware of the gospel of our redemption and to exult in the joy of our Father's love.

Now since very few of us have time or skill to do these things ourselves, we must call in the professional architect, whose business this is. At the same time, however, we need not be at his mercy, accepting from him altars and arrangements that do not express our evangelical faith or aid in our worship. He may not be a Presbyterian. He may not even be a Christian. Let us therefore educate ourselves along lines suggested here until we know what we want and must have in the light of our Presbyterian heritage. Such an understanding will not only help us with our immediate problem of building a church, adding a wing, or remodeling a sanctuary to the glory of God, but it will also enrich our whole understanding of Christian faith and worship. And this is true, even if the place where we worship is so rich in beauty that it needs no more from us than loving care and appreciation.

Latin America Seeks a Faith

By W. Stanley Rycroft

In November, 1950, the Mexican editor of *Tiempo* published an open letter to William O'Dwyer, the new U. S. Ambassador, in which he pointed out that Mr. O'Dwyer was the first Roman Catholic ambassador ever to be sent by the United States to his country, and reminding him that the position of that Church was different in Mexico from that which it occupied in the United States. "Maybe the people of the United States do not know," he said, "that a century and a half ago the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico lost its initiative and creative spirit . . ." [and that] "many so-called Mexican Catholics live in gross, idolatrous paganism, a phenomenon which is accounted for by the fact that the clergy is largely made up of men who are spiritually and culturally ignorant and who, far from fulfilling the designs of the Saviour, serve the worldly and utilitarian aims of a church that has sunk so low as to bless bull rings and patronize places where souls are degraded." Such statements are frequently found in the writings of Latin-American liberals or anticlericals.

The masses of the Latin-American people are becoming increasingly indifferent to the Roman Catholic Church or hostile to it. Practicing Roman Catholics, according to eminent Catholic observers, are now a decided minority in Latin America. One such observer from the United States states that the masses have "virtually committed apostasy." They are outside the Church, estranged from it, because it is so unrelated to the life of the times in which they live and so bound up with medieval, superstitious practices and reactionary forces. And yet these people are still on the rolls and counted as Roman Catholics.

A Revolution Is Taking Place

To see more clearly why this is so, we must realize first that the Latin-American world is undergoing a social revolution. Although it is difficult to make any statements that would apply to all areas, since conditions vary from country to country, yet it can be said that Latin America is emerging from feudalism, or semifeudal colonialism, and entering a period of industrialism. In Latin America as a whole, two thirds of the population still depend on agriculture for their livelihood, though the proportion is lower in such countries as Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay, where industrialization has proceeded more rapidly. However, it seems that the Latin-American countries with their great natural resources will, for some time to come, be largely producers of raw materials. During World War II, Latin America produced 44 per cent of the strategic war materials needed by the United States.

The good, usable land is still largely in the hands of a small, wealthy, landowning class, representing about seven per cent of the population. The Roman Catholic Church also owns land, and much of its property is tax exempt. The governing, or ruling, classes are drawn largely from the traditional landowning families, whereas the great masses of the people live below the level of subsistence. More than half are illiterate, and the majority suffer from malnutrition and are ill clothed and inadequately housed; they have very little voice in the affairs of their country. While their official representatives in the U.N. give eloquent speeches about freedom and democracy, the people know that in reality it is "government of the few, by the few, and for the few" in their own land.

Because of these conditions, Latin America is one of the great areas of the world where there is an increasingly insistent demand for social justice. In this great revolutionary period in history, the exploited masses want better conditions; they will no longer submit to exploitation and subhuman standards of living. In Latin America people believe that any change must be for the better. They have a very keen sense of social injustice and a resentment against all forms of exploitation. In their reaction against Roman Catholicism, large numbers of the oppressed people have embraced agnosticism and are scornful of all religious concepts. They know that the Church is there in case of a death or a wedding in the family; and for the sake of peace in the family, they allow their womenfolk to continue to go; but to them the Church, and so Christianity, is an impotent force in a time of great social upheaval.

Many other factors enter into the situation, but the Roman Catholic Church must take part of the blame for its failure to achieve more social progress and human betterment. A vast spiritual vacuum has been produced because of the absence of a great social dynamic and a revitalizing force in society that would challenge men and lead them on to higher levels of human living. Men have looked in vain to the Roman hierarchy for spiritual leadership. What they have heard is a flood of sentimental oratory about the helpless Babe, the dead Christ as a victim, and, above all, the virtues and intercessory powers of Mary. They

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have seen a system that is willing to use political power and pressure to maintain its own ascendancy and prestige or to protect its wealth.

It is easy to understand why the Roman hierarchy is interested in perpetuating the static type of society and the feudal system: its own wealth and position are threatened. As Professor Hromadka, of Czechoslovakia, speaking at a meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, expressed it, "The Roman Catholic Church is the last refuge of an old society where all the reactionary feudal interests of the past have taken shelter." The hierarchy is the ally of the rich landowning class and sometimes of the military groups. Dictators must have the support of both the Church and the military caste to stay in power. On the other hand, the masses of the people, and the students and intellectuals as champions of the underdog, look for some force or power that will break these shackles.

In some respects there is a certain similarity between conditions in Latin America today and those in Russia before 1917. The hungry, landless, downtrodden, poor, illiterate, sick masses are a submerged people, and a small, wealthy, privileged minority is upheld by a political hierarchy, spiritually far removed from the needs and longings of the common people. The danger is that many will be attracted by Communism and that violent revolution may someday overthrow the whole existing order.

Where Do Protestants Stand?

What, then, is the significance of Evangelical Christianity in Latin America? In the first place, let it be noted that we call it "Evangelical" rather than "Protestant" Christianity. That is the name commonly used by our brethren in these lands, and the reason for it is important. To many people the word "Protestant" has a negative connotation, as a deviation or dissent from an established position. This, of course, is not the best or the root meaning of the term; but Latin-American Protestants do not want any possible chance for misunderstanding. So they call themselves "Evangelicals." They want it clearly understood that they are not carrying on a kind of negative, anti-Catholic campaign. They see around them the negative attitude of many anticlericals, and they want to emphasize that what they stand for is a positive New Testament type of Christianity—an evangelical Christianity. They believe in a gospel of salvation through Christ, that it is Christ who saves and transforms life, not a church or a system. They do not believe, as the Catholics do, that one joins the church in order to be saved. Rather, they teach that one joins the church because one has experienced salvation in Christ. That is why Evangelical churches are very strict about membership. The Church, for our Evangelical brethren, is the beloved community, the group of believers, bound together by a common love for and loyalty to Christ, and a desire to serve him. They are absolutely opposed

THE CHRIST ON MOUNT CORCOVADO, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

to the idea of a political church and all its intrigues.

What Latin America needs above everything else is a faith by which to live, something that will give meaning and purpose to life. In the spiritual void that has been created, some are turning to esoteric cults; in Brazil, for instance, it is estimated there are ten million spiritualists. Others are turning to Communism as an ideology that may give meaning to life. A missionary in Colombia tells of a conversation with a distinguished professional woman who came seeking new faith. "In my hour of greatest need," she said, "I gave myself wholeheartedly to Communism, only to abandon it later, completely disillusioned. I come to you because I sincerely believe I shall find in Protestant Christianity the answer to my quest. Not only that, but I am convinced that Protestantism holds out the only hope for the complete transformation of the moral and spiritual life of my people."

Many Latin Americans lost in the wilderness are on such a quest. Wistfully they ask national Evangelical leaders or missionaries what their religion is and whether they can find a vital religious faith that does not do violence to their reason. A North American pastor, well versed in labor relations and industrial conditions, was attending a meeting of workers and students in Santiago, Chile. They were inaugurating a course of evening classes for workers; the students were there as teachers. After the pastor spoke, a group of five students came up to him, and, when they saw the little cross he wore in his lapel, they asked, "Are you a priest?" "No," he replied, "I am a Protestant minister." "Good," they said. The students

(Continued on page 70)

The Rejection of the Landowner's Son

Matthew 21: 33-46

THE situation in which our Lord spoke a parable generally provides us with the key to the teaching he meant the parable to convey. In the case of the parable of the Rejection of the Landowner's Son, Matthew's account gives us the help we need. Jesus was speaking in the Temple court. The chief priests and elders were waiting for him when he entered the Temple grounds, and as soon as Jesus was well launched upon his discourse, with a large and attentive audience listening in reverent silence to him, they bluntly broke in with the question, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" (R.S.V.) Jesus silenced them with another searching question, and then proceeded to tell two parables, of which the one before us is the second. In two verses farther on, Matthew gives us the key we need: "When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them" (*v. 45*, R.S.V.). We have here, then, a parable of judgment upon privileged sinners who reject the Son of God. This should give us food for serious thought, for brief reflection will reveal to us that we professing Christians may fall into that very class.

1. These tenants began well. The assumption is that they gave promise of being trustworthy, diligent tenants. They must have been persons of character, or they would not have been considered for the tenancy of so valuable a piece of property. The householder went away thoroughly satisfied that in due course he would receive his share of the harvest. And, no doubt, those tenants, when they signed their lease, fully intended to keep the terms set forth in it. They began well.

2. The lust for mastery corrupted them. How did this evil passion enter their hearts? It entered by the hidden door of secret self-interest. Innocently enough, one of them, in a moment of relaxation from tending the vines, let his gaze roam across the vineyard, with its ripening and abundant harvest, and began to speculate upon what his share would amount to. It was easy enough then to indulge in a little daydreaming on the good fortune of anyone to be not the tenant, but the owner, of a place like this. Had the owner unexpectedly appeared at that moment, possibly the evil seed might have been cast forth from his mind. But the owner was far away and not in the tenant's thoughts. Self-importance fed the dream until it obsessed him. He found himself at last actually talking to the other tenants about it. Just as an idea, of course, and nothing more. But no potent idea ever remains in the mind very long as merely an idea. It becomes a motive, and motives are the atomic energy of human life. Soon the dream of possessing the vineyard became wishful thinking to possess it, and wishful thinking became the lust to possess it at any cost. Had anyone told these tenants in the spring that before harvest time they would have committed one murder after another to get that vineyard for themselves, even murdering the householder's son, they would have been shocked. The terrible truth is that the passion for mastery conditions the human soul to descend to any level of evil-doing to gain one's ends.

Subtly, Jesus was painting a picture of his own future rejection at the hands of those very Pharisees. These men never dreamed at first that they were capable of plotting in cold blood to bring Jesus to his death. But when they heard this parable, "they perceived that he was speaking about them" (R.S.V.). Leaders of the religious life of Israel, plotting the murder of the Lord's Anointed!

3. The day of reckoning comes. The record says, "When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes . . ." (R.S.V.). It does not say "if he comes." His coming was the most natural thing to expect. No one plants a vineyard, digs a winepress, and builds a watchtower, setting a strong protective hedge all about it, and then turns his back on it for good. That simply doesn't make sense. Of course, the householder was coming back to judge the stewardship of his trusted servants.

The primary meaning of this parable is that Israel—the servants entrusted by God with the vineyard of redemption—has rejected the only One who could make redemption possible. Jesus is here forecasting his death at the hands of his own people as typified by the Pharisees. So the vineyard will be taken from them and given to Gentiles. For Israel, the day of reckoning was already upon them.

A derived meaning, not less important, applies to us: If we reject the Son of God, the Landowner, we too shall have our heritage taken from us and given to another. We know there is a reckoning day coming. We—the professing Christians of today—are the sinners of privilege. We cannot plead that we knew no better. We who are taking the vineyard of life for ourselves are doing it with wide-open eyes. Are we aware that unless, by the mercy of God, we seek his help in casting the evil demon from us, we may yet be among those who reject Christ and crucify him afresh? We who have all our lives thanked God that we are not as the Pharisees and the scribes, are we prepared to confess that our Lord spoke this parable about us?

—WALTER BARLOW

This is the second in our series of expositions of parables that Jesus told about himself.

DR. BARLOW is director of our Church's Faith and Life Seminar program for ministers.

WHO WROTE LUKE AND JOHN?

By W. Douglas Chamberlain

In the last issue of CROSSROADS, *Dr. Chamberlain, professor of New Testament at Louisville Theological Seminary, outlined very briefly the facts we know about the writing of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. Now he gives us similar information about the other two Gospels.*

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

This is the only one of the Gospels hich is addressed to an individual eader. Theophilus could be a peronal name, but we know of no such arly disciple; it could also be an pithet describing the Christian eader, for whom it was intended, as "lover of God." Burnett H. Streeter as called it a "prudential pseudoym" for some Roman official of high tanding whom Luke does not want to xpose to official censure for his faith nd belief.

The Purpose of This Gospel

Luke declares his purpose in the rst sentence: "To set forth in rder a declaration of those things hich are most surely believed among s." In other words, it is a document o instruct his friend in the Christian aith. Luke also stated that he knew ther accounts of the life of Jesus. Iow many, he does not say, and we ave, at this time, no way of knowing. Ve do know that Luke had at least hree main sources of information.)ne was certainly the Gospel of Iark; another was the source that cholars refer to as Q. In addition to hese, Luke had at least one other source, from which he drew about 580 verses. Some think that he had a fourth source, the infancy narratives, mentioned below.

Characteristics of This Gospel

As the Gospel of Matthew deals with the royalty of Jesus, and Mark with his power, so Luke deals with his grace. Luke depicts Jesus as the Saviour of all sorts of men, the satisfier of every human need. This appears in many ways. When Matthew and Mark quote *Isa. 40: 3,* they end with "make his paths straight." Luke continues on to *v. 6,* ending with "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." For Luke, "all flesh" includes not only Jews and Samaritans, but Gentiles also. It included even those disreputable Jews who were worse than the Gentiles—the taxgatherers and the sinners, outcasts from respectable society. Women, who were rather unimportant in Jewish religious life, are given a very prominent place by Luke. These include the rich and the poor, the saint and the sinner. Even a repentant woman of the street stands in better relation to God than a haughty Pharisee. Luke emphasizes the grace of God in the forgiveness of sin, and the gratitude of man expressed in prayer and praise.

The Arrangement of This Gospel

Luke does not follow, in his retelling of the story, the framework established by Mark. He deals rather freely with Mark's material, not using nearly so much of it as Matthew does. Luke's Gospel is arranged in alternate blocks of material from Mark and material from other Gospel sources. The infancy stories of the first two chapters are peculiar to Luke. It has been suggested that Mary herself was the source of this information; they do seem to have a feminine touch. Luke might have heard them while at Caesarea, during Paul's imprisonment. A great deal of *Luke 3: 1 to 4: 30* is found in Matthew, but not in Mark. Luke does not really begin to use Mark until *ch. 4: 31. Luke 4: 31 to 6: 19* is taken from *Mark 1: 21 to 3: 19. Luke 6: 20 to 8: 3* is another block of non-Marcan material. *Luke 8: 4 to 9: 50* is taken from *Mark 4: 1 to 9: 40.* The largest non-Marcan block occurs in *Luke 9: 51 to 18: 14.* For the incident of the blind men at Jericho, in *ch. 18: 35-43,* Luke uses Mark's account; then he follows it with another block of non-Marcan material in *ch. 19.* From the entry into Jerusalem to the end of the story, Luke mingles his material from Mark with subject matter from some other source. From this, it is apparent that Luke's Gospel is a compilation of materials that he gathered from the many sources to which he refers in his introduction.

The Date of This Gospel

We have no sure facts upon which to base a final conclusion about this matter of date. Again, we must consult tradition and the internal evidence of the Gospel itself. Irenaeus (second century) wrote that after the death of Peter and Paul, "Luke, the follower of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by Paul." This would place the writing after A.D. 64.

The most generally accepted date for Luke is about A.D. 75. In *Mark, ch. 13,* Mark seems to look forward to the destruction of Jerusalem that took place in A.D. 70. From *Luke 21: 24,* many scholars think that Luke was looking back on that particular event.

The Place of Writing

There is a very early tradition that Luke was a native of Antioch in Syria. Therefore, some have concluded that he wrote his Gospel there. There is no compelling reason why a man should always write his books in his home town. In fact, this happens rather seldom. If the Gospel of Matthew was written in Antioch, and the two Gospels were written at about the same time, it would be strange for neither to show any influence from the other. This, it would seem, would rule out Luke's Gospel having been written there. Another suggested location for his writing is Achaea (Greece). With this, Gregory of Nazianzus and Jerome (both fourth century Christians) agree. If Luke did write in Corinth, the capital of Achaea, he might have addressed the Roman governor as most excellent Theophilus, that is, "Your Excellency," using Theophilus as a pseudonym for prudential reasons.

Jerome places the writing of The Acts in Rome. This must have been sometime later. Luke might well have taken his Gospel with him when he went to Rome. This would have given the Roman church two Gospels, Mark and Luke.

There is no reason to doubt that Luke, the beloved physician and friend of Paul, was the author of this Gospel. (More information about him is given in a lesson article on "How a Man Wrote a Gospel," page 68.) The Gospel of Luke, with its strong interest in those outside the pale of Jewish orthodoxy, is the sort of Gospel one would expect from a close friend and co-worker of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

For well over a century, this book has been a favorite battleground for critical scholars. Perhaps no other book of the Bible has had more printer's ink devoted to it. The conflict has arisen out of a sense of its great importance for Christian faith. Some have been frankly hostile to its theology; others have been less frank, but equally hostile; still others have loved its portrait of our Lord more than any other we have. This discussion has not been all wasted effort. To be sure, it has greatly disturbed the faith of some good people, but we have a much fuller appreciation of the value and meaning of this Gospel than we had before the discussion took place.

Purpose of Writing

No one can understand the meaning of a book until he understands the author's purpose in writing it. And the discussion about this Gospel has made one thing crystal-clear: the author's purpose was primarily religious, not biographical or historical. Even to the casual reader, this should have been clear from the beginning. The author announced his purpose at the end of *ch. 20:* "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Its purpose is to evoke faith that issues in eternal life. This Gospel is a theological writing. It is good theology. Good theology must have as its foundation good history; the history recorded here is good history, although the historical interest of the author was secondary.

Characteristics of This Gospel

It is clearly a composition, not a compilation, as are the Synoptic Gospels. The author has written independently a document that bears the stamp of his own mind. A compilation never does this to the extent that an original composition does. This Gospel is a closely knit unity, falling into two main parts: Part 1, *chs. 1 to 12,* portray the Christ who brought life into the world; Part 2, *chs. 13 to 20,* portray the Christ who made life available to the world through his sacrificial death on the cross. This life is not more of the sort of life men already have. It does not have in it the germs of death. Christ brings a new kind of life. There is a parallel development of faith and unbelief. Each rises to a climax, at the end of the book: one is the confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God"; the other is the crucifixion. *Chapter 21* is an appendix.

While discussing the unity of this Gospel, we must mention the story of the woman taken in adultery, *chs. 7: 53 to 8: 11.* This passage is not in the oldest and best manuscripts of the Gospel. It occurs in several other places in John and is also found inserted in twelve manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke. What does all this mean? In my judgment, it means that it is a real incident in the life of Jesus, but that it was not a part of this Gospel as it was first written. Since Christians knew the story, some inserted it in John, at various places, and some in Luke. The manuscripts that were used in translating our King James Version had the story at the end of the seventh chapter of John; but if the translators had used those which have the story in Luke, for instance, we would have grown up to read the story in that Gospel.

Relation to the Synoptic Gospels

The Gospel of John shows less relationship to the Gospel of Matthew than to the other Synoptics. There is a very definite relationship between Mark, Luke, and John. There is a consistent setting forth of Christianity as the universal religion, which was casting off the limitations of its Jewish origin. Each goes a step farther than its predecessor. They are thoroughly in line with the theology of Paul in this respect. According to some scholars, the Synoptic Gospels represent Jesus only as a Galilaean teacher of morals; whereas John presents him as an exalted heavenly Being, the Christ. This is less than a half-truth. No higher claim is made for Jesus than in *Matt. 11: 27* and *Luke 10: 22.* All four of the Gospels present Jesus as a heavenly Being as well as a Galilaean prophet.

The Date of This Gospel

Something like a century ago, F. C. Baur, of Tübingen, Germany, was proclaiming that this Gospel could not have been written before A.D. 160. For a while he had a great following; but since his day the radical critics have been conducting

(Continued on page 70)

The Gospel of the Word

Thirteen Studies in The Gospel According to John

By Alan Richardson

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIFE
A program for church and home

The Author of These Lesson Articles

Alan Richardson is a man highly respected in the field of New Testament tudies today. He began his writing career as a Study Secretary for the Student hristian Movement in England, where his courses in Bible for college students stablished a pattern for Christian education that is gaining wide favor in this ountry. His book *A Preface to Bible Study* outlines his method and provides aluable insights into the understanding of Scripture. Continuing his educa-ional ministry, he has written *Christian Apologetics,* a presentation of Christian heology in the light of modern concepts. This book is more for the minister, nd Dr. Richardson has expressed its ideas in a less technical form for lay tudents in a smaller volume, *The Gospel and Modern Thought.* He is also the ditor of a new and helpful volume, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible,* hich, in brief articles, examines some of the vocabulary of Scripture for its heological meaning.

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ALAN RICHARDSON

The Plan of These Lesson Articles

This study of The Gospel According to John considers the great themes and ideas that are developed in this Gospel. The lessons, therefore, do not follow the Scripture in any consecutive fashion, but take passages that develop the themes wherever they occur in the Gospel. Nor do the lessons present the career and teachings of Jesus in a chronological manner. Rather, they are organized around three main headings: (1) concepts that describe the *Person of Christ;* (2) concepts that set forth the *work of Christ in the community of believers—the Church;* and (3) concepts that establish the *witnessing work of the Church in the world.*

Following this pattern, we shall, in the first five lessons, consider these concepts of the Person of Christ:

1. Christ the Word of God
2. Christ the Glory of God
3. Christ the King
4. Christ the Lamb of God
5. Christ the Judge of the World

Then we shall turn to some of John's teachings that show the life of Christ in the Church:

6. The Sign of the Empty Tomb
7. The Church: The Vine and the Branches
8. The Bread of Life
9. The Old and the New

Finally, we shall ask how the Church does its work of witnessing to Christ:

10. The New Birth and the New Commandment
11. Overcoming the World
12. The Witness of the Spirit
13. The Universal Christ

Students who keep these divisions clearly in mind should have no difficulty in following the plan of the lessons.

CHRIST THE WORD OF GOD

Read *John 1: 1-18.*

THESE verses, commonly spoken of as the "Prologue" to The Gospel According to John, contain a profound meditation upon the significance of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. John does not tell the story of the birth of Jesus, as do Matthew and Luke; he assumes that his readers are familiar with it. Instead, he gives us a summary of what a deeply Christian mind had come to think of as the meaning of the life of Christ. He wrote near the end of the first century, and by this time the Church had had time to realize what the story of Jesus, as told in the earlier Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, must signify. It is not that John is adding any new facts to that story; he is, rather, bringing out the full meaning that was already implicit in it.

The opening words of the Prologue consciously echo the first words of the Old Testament (*Gen. 1: 1*): "In the beginning God created . . ."[1] The ancient writer of Genesis could not have known that the Son and the Holy Spirit were with God from before the creation of the world. This was not known before the revelation of God's nature and purpose in Christ. However, some of the old Hebrew writers had dimly foreshadowed the truth. They had thought of "wisdom" as God's helper and instrument in the work of creation, and they had half poetically spoken of wisdom as a personal being. (Read *Prov. 8: 22-31,* for example; or in *The Apocrypha, The Wisdom of Solomon, 7: 22-27* and *Ecclesiasticus 24: 1-9.*) John does not actually call Christ "the wisdom of God," as Paul had done before him (*I Cor. 1: 24*); but it is clear that he thinks of Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament insights into God's method and plan of creation. That which the Old Testament had obscurely foreshadowed can now be clearly seen in the light of Christ's coming.

When Words Mattered

The term that John chooses in order to explain his conception of the significance of Christ is "Word." This choice can be understood only in the light of the importance of this term in the Old Testament. To us, nowadays, words often seem to be trivial things, often lightly spoken and, for the most part, rather ineffectual; but to the Hebrew mind, words possessed great significance. They were not to be trifled with, because they carried a self-realizing value proportionate to the worth of the speaker. For example, a word of blessing or a curse, if it proceeded from a man of worth, would assuredly carry weighty consequences for good or ill. A prophecy on the lips of a true prophet would be bound to come to pass, because the words of such a man possessed a certain power of self-fulfillment. Words were literally regarded as part of the personality of their speaker, a kind of outgoing of his very self, an instrument or agent of the realization of his will. Hence, the words that a man utters must be serious, well-considered, truthful, and benevolent: they must not be frivolous, unmeditated, false, or malicious; oaths and swearing are unnecessary, because a word possesses its own self-filling power without such violence; and, above all, blasphemy is to be avoided, since it will fail to harm the Holy One against whom it is directed and will recoil upon the head of the blasphemer.

When all this is applied to God and to the words of God, we readily understand that a tremendous potency is being ascribed to his utterance. If the word of a man does not return to him void, how much more will the word of God accomplish what he pleases! (See *Isa. 55: 11.*) The word is God's instrument, or agent, of creation and operation. God makes things, or does things, but not with hands and tools. He needs only to speak, and it is done: "He commanded, and they were created" (*Ps. 148: 5*). Or, as we read in Genesis, "God *said,* Let there be . . ." (*Gen. 1: 3*), and it was so. He creates merely by speaking a word:

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made,
And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."
(*Ps. 33: 6.*)

Thus, the Old Testament teaches that the word of God is the instrument of his will, his agent in creation. It is also important to notice that the word of the Lord is also his instrument of revelation, the means by which he makes his purpose known to men. (Note the recurring Old Testament clause, "The word of the Lord came unto the prophet.") Both these ideas of God's word as the instrument of creation and of revelation may be found side by side, for example, in *Ps. 147: 15-19.*

The Creative and Revealing Word in Christ

John takes over this Old Testament idea of God's word as the instrument of both creation and revelation. Christ, he tells us, is both God's agent of creation and his agent of revelation. Christ is the Word of God—it was he through whom the world was made, and it is he through whom the truth about God's nature and purpose is brought to men. This teaching, of course, is not peculiar to this Gospel; it was the common possession of the whole Apostolic Church. Paul, for instance, at

[1] All Bible quotations in this study section are from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

n earlier date had affirmed it: "In him [Christ] were ll things created, in the heavens and upon the earth . . . all things have been created through him, and nto him" (*Col. 1: 16*). John, however, expresses it in is own distinctive way. He is the only writer in the ew Testament who employs the Old Testament conception of the word of God in this sense. It may also e remarked that outside the Prologue he himself does ot again use the term "Word" in this way.

If we accept this apostolic teaching, we must abandon any unitarian ideas of God. That is to say, God was not a lonely God before the world was created; e did not have to make the world in order to possess n export market for his love. Before the creation God was Love. God was a society of love: the Father loved he Son in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The world was created as a free act of God's grace, not as a kind of economic necessity in order that he might have an object of his love. God is necessary to the world, but he world is not necessary to God. The Word was with God (the Father) in the Creation, and indeed, Creation was effected through his instrumentality (*John 1: 3*). This Word of God is not to be thought of as other than God; Christ the Word is of the same substance as the Father: the Word was God, or, as we might equally well translate the last clause of *v. 1*, "the Word was divine."

This creative Word was also the revealer. John's favorite term for the revealing of truth is "light." He is thinking of the bright light as of the sun at noonday, which makes all things clear. Christ is the supreme source of illumination, by which we know all the truth that can be known about God and his creation, or, in John's profound but simple language, Christ is "the light of the world." (Lesson 5 will develop this theme further.) Christ's life is "the light of men"; however dark the world may be, his light can never be put out (*vs. 4, 5*). The significance of John the Baptist, to whom the Evangelist refers in *vs. 6-8*, is that he bore witness to Christ; he pointed to the true light.

Since every man coming into the world is made in the image of God, he carries within his own soul a reflection of the creative light of the Word by which he was made (*v. 9*); but the tragedy of our human existence is that mankind, though created by the Word and lighted by his image, fails to recognize him. The world did not recognize Jesus as the creative Word of God when he came into the world. Even his own special people, the Jews—perhaps this is what is meant by "his own" in *v. 11*—would not receive him. Yet there were those who received him (*v. 12*), and here John undoubtedly means the Christian Church, the company of those who have accepted Jesus as God's Word. These have been given the right to be "children of God."

Men are not naturally children of God and have no claim upon God as sons have upon their fathers; we are reminded of Paul's metaphor of Christians as the *adopted* children of God (*Rom. 8: 15*). There is only one Son of God by right—Jesus Christ: this is the point of the expression "the only begotten Son" in *John 1: 18*. We can become sons only by the grace of God in adopting us, in giving us the right to be his children: we are born into his family (the Church), not by any natural birth ("blood," "flesh," "will of man," in *v. 13*), but solely by God's grace.

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. What did words mean to the Hebrews?
2. In what respects does John derive his understanding of "the Word" from Hebrew thought? In what respects does his understanding derive from Greek thought?
3. How does the concept of the Word fulfill the purpose of this Gospel? (Compare the last paragraph of this lesson article with *John 20: 31.*)

"The Word Became Flesh"

In *v. 14* we reach the supreme statement of the mystery of the incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth: "the Word became flesh." God, in the person of the creative Word, became man. The eternal Word, or only-begotten "Son" of God, was born on earth a human child. As the ancient Fathers of the Church were fond of saying, "God became what we are, in order that we might become what he is." This is the heart of the Christian gospel, and it is a mystery and a miracle that we can never explain or fully understand; it must be accepted on simple faith. The Almighty Maker of heaven and earth accommodated himself to the narrow limits of a human life. This is not an original perception on the part of John; it is the faith of every writer in the New Testament. We may, for example, read Paul's statement of the mystery in *Phil. 2: 5-10:* God "emptied himself" of his divine and superhuman powers and took the form of a servant. Those who have eyes to see may, however, behold beneath the servant's form the royal dignity of the Son of God. As John says, "We [i.e., the Christians whose eyes have been opened to penetrate the mystery concealed beneath the form of a servant] beheld his glory" (*John 1: 14*). (The theme of "glory" is dealt with more fully in Lesson 2.)

In the remaining four verses of the Prologue, the writer tells what it means to us that the Word has come: "Of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace" (*v. 16*).

The full divine nature of God is now imparted to human life (*v. 16*); no longer must we strive by law—the law given by Moses—to attain to God and his righteousness: the truth is brought to us by grace, that is, by the free and unearned gift of God. In this gift God imparts to us what we could never have discovered or won for ourselves. (*V. 17.*) We cannot see God for ourselves or find our own way to him; but now the perfect revelation of God has been given to us in the Per-

son of the Son, who is the creative Word—the Word who was from all eternity intimately and inseparably one with God ("in the bosom of the Father," *v. 18*).

What "Word" Meant to the Greeks

Perhaps John chose the term "Word" because, in the Gentile world for which he was writing, it had become a kind of jargon word of popular philosophy. He could make use of it by giving it a new meaning, by pouring into a philosophical commonplace an altogether new and Christian meaning. The Stoics had popularized the term *logos* (Greek for "word") and had spoken about the immanent *logos* of God as pervading and upholding all things. *Logos* meant much more than our English "word": it meant also "reason," "purpose," "meaning" (cf. such words as psych*ology*, bi*ology*, *logic*). Words are functions of rational beings (animals use no words); they are the means of communication between one rational being and another. By speaking of Christ as *logos* John intends to convey to the Greek mind that he is the meaning, the purpose, the "reason for being," of all that is. But even if John thus utilizes a popular philosophical term for his teaching purpose, his basic thought is Hebrew and not Greek; it derives from the Old Testament conception of God's word as the agent of his power.

There is, however, one very important implication of John's use of "Word," which must on no account be overlooked. A word, as we have said, is the means of communication between one rational being and another. Christ is thus God's rational address to the world—the appeal of the divine reason to the reason (*logos*) in man. He is God's message to us, his self-communication, his self-revelation. He is indeed God's ultimate revelation to the world, God's "last word," so to speak. When we are addressed by anyone, we have to decide what we shall answer. We cannot avoid the decision; it is useless to delay our answer in the hope of being able to avoid having to make up our mind; to give no answer is to answer no. Those who have encountered Christ—in the Bible or in the preaching and witness of the Church—have received God's address, his personal address, to them. They must answer with the yes of wholehearted faith, or they must turn their face away and answer no. There is no middle course.

2

CHRIST THE GLORY OF GOD

Read *John 12: 37-43.*

"Glory" is one of the great words of the Bible. John borrows it from the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament), with all the rich meaning that it carries in traditional Jewish usage. Let us begin our consideration of this word by seeing some of its meaning in the Old Testament.

The *glory* of a man was all his worth or substance, all his dignity, honor, renown, nobility, and wisdom. But the word was used also of God, and it came to signify all that could be apprehended of God's majestic presence on earth. God's worth and substance are far beyond man's sight and understanding; yet when God, of his gracious goodness, chooses to make known something of his inscrutable being, we have his "glory" made manifest upon the earth.

Sometimes this glory is thought of as the visible sign of God's presence on the earth, as in the cloud over the Tent (Tabernacle) in *Ex. 33: 7-23*. Here the language, of course, is symbolic, as all language must be that attempts to describe the mystery of God's presence among his people. Yet the cloud that reveals the being of God at the same time conceals his presence from mortal sight: in this life all unveiling of the divine nature is also and at the same time a veiling of it from our human gaze. There are always those who do not see the revelation of God when it is given. This is a paradox, a condition that seems to contradict itself. If God desires to reveal himself to mankind, why does he also permit that some men should not see the revelation? We can only answer that God remains Lord of his revelation; he gives it when and where he will. Men can never possess it, as something of their own that they can use or control at will; it comes from God. He alone makes his glory visible—but only to the eyes of faith. Unbelievers cannot see the glory of God.

Ezekiel, in applying the word "glory" to God, first describes his great vision of God upon his throne. Then, having strained the resources of human language to describe its splendor, he concludes: "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face" (*Ezek. 1: 28*).

As time went by, the Scriptural writers come more and more to associate the revelation of the glory of God with the expected "day of the Lord," the coming age of the Messiah. Thus, in the great prophecy of the coming Messianic reign in *Isa., ch. 40* ("Comfort ye, comfort ye my people . . ."), we read, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (*v. 5*). The Messiah, when he came, would reveal the true glory of God.

The Glory Made Visible

If we have properly understood the significance of "glory" in the Old Testament, we shall not be surprised to find that the New Testament writers present Christ as the fulfillment of the expectation of the revelation

of the glory of God. Christ is the glory of God made visible on earth to those who have eyes to see it, that is, to those who have faith in him. "The glory of the Lord shone round about" the shepherds at Christ's birth, and the "heavenly host" sang "Glory to God in the highest." (*Luke 2: 9, 13, 14.*) At his transfiguration, when for a moment the veil of the servant's form was lifted from before the eyes of his chosen disciples, "they saw his glory" (*ch. 9: 32*). The writer of The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Christ as "the effulgence of his [God's] glory, and the very image of his substance" (*Heb. 1: 3*), and Paul says that Christ's disciples reflect "as in a mirror the glory of the Lord," and "are transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (*II Cor. 3: 18*).

The glory of God is made visible in Christ, but it is visible only to those who possess the eyes of faith. John strongly insists upon the paradox of revelation that we have noted above. Christ's glory, or the glory of God in Christ, is not seen by men without faith. "We beheld his glory," John says in *John 1: 14*, and by "we" he means the disciples of Christ whose eyes had been opened. In *ch. 2: 11* (in the King James Version) he says, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and *his disciples* believed on him."

It is helpful to pause for a moment on this use of the word "miracles" in the King James Version of John's Gospel. This Gospel usually employs the word to mean "signs"; and the "sign" referred to in *ch. 2: 11* is the miracle of the changing of the water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. By using the word "sign" in this sense he intends us to understand that the miracles of Jesus were not mere empty wonders and portents, but actions with a meaning, vehicles of teaching, as it were, that contained beneath the outward form a deep symbolic lesson, if only we would search for it diligently.

Men without faith saw the outward act and perhaps were astonished at the miracle; but astonishment is not belief, and the miracles of Jesus were performed not to evoke astonishment (as the works of a conjurer or a magician), but to make manifest a hidden truth and glory. It is the disciples, the believers only, who see the glory and come to believe on him. In this matter John is at one with Mark in asserting that the miracles of Jesus are not mere "wonders," but signs to those who believe.

All the writers of the New Testament demonstrate the Biblical paradox of revelation. The Babe in the manger, "the Son of man who had not where to lay his head," the crucified Teacher—the historical Jesus indeed reveals God to those whose eyes can penetrate the mystery of his Person; but he is also a veiling of the Godhead, a hiding of the divine nature within our human flesh, from the eyes of men without faith. This Gospel truth is worked out carefully by John in his treatment of the theme of the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Seeing, They Do Not Perceive

In the passage that we have selected for special attention (*John 12: 37-43*), we read that although Jesus had performed many signs (miracles, or acts of power containing a deep symbolic meaning), the majority of those who witnessed them did not believe on him. They did not perceive with their spiritual eyes that the wonderful deeds of Jesus were indeed the signs that the Messiah had come. John notes a parallel in the prophecy of Isaiah. The prophets of Israel had long been puzzled by the fact that what seemed so immediately obvious to them was hidden from the eyes of their contemporaries. It is a problem that sooner or later confronts all thoughtful Christians: How is it that what seems so certain and obvious to them—the utter divinity of Christ, in all his weakness, humanity, and suffering—should be so completely concealed from others, even from decent, kindly, and serious-minded people? Why do some people see the truth whereas others do not? This is the problem (in one of its aspects) which theologians speak of as the "mystery of election," and there is no easy answer to it. But it is an undeniable fact in the experience of all truly sensitive religious minds. The more we ourselves have experienced the glory of God, the greater will be our perplexity that others do not see it.

Isaiah, as John reminds us (*v. 41*), had seen the glory of God. In his vision in the year that King Uzziah died (740 B.C.), Isaiah, in the Temple at Jerusalem, had seen the Lord, "high and lifted up," and had seen the whole earth as "full of his glory." (Read *Isa., ch. 6.*) Then he had been confronted by the mystery of unbelief, by the inexplicable fact that other people could not see the glory that he had seen (*vs. 9, 10,* quoted in *John 12: 40*). He concluded that God himself must have blinded the eyes of the unbelievers.

This is the negative aspect of the Biblical teaching that only God can open blind eyes, or, in other words, that faith is a gift from God. Why it is given to some and withheld from others constitutes the problem of "election"—the fact that God calls some and not others. We must be on our guard against accepting facile solutions to this deep problem of unbelief. Perhaps we should not try to say more than that God is God and that he knows his own purpose better than we do. Paul discusses the whole subject in *Rom., chs. 9 to 11*, and this is, broadly speaking, his conclusion.

Isaiah's experience of God's glory on the one hand and of the people's hardness of heart on the other is paralleled and deepened ("fulfilled," *John 12: 38*) in the coming of Christ. Here is the heart of the mystery. It has already been stated in *ch. 1: 10, 11:* "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not." But it was added immediately that there were some who accepted him: "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God" (*v. 12*). Sim-

ilarly, here also John implies that there were those who accepted Jesus and believed on him, that is, acknowledged him to be the supreme revelation of God, their own personal Master and Lord. Among these there were even a few of the "rulers" who believed on him (*ch. 12: 42*). John doubtless means members of the Jewish high court, or Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish governmental authority under the Romans. Elsewhere in the Gospel we meet with two members of it, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea. Of these the former came to Jesus, we are told, "by night" (*ch. 3: 2*), and the latter was "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews" (*ch. 19: 38*). Perhaps they are referred to (along with others unnamed) in *ch. 12: 42*. Members of the Sanhedrin, Sadducees, nevertheless found it advisable to keep on the right side of the powerful Pharisees, who controlled most of the synagogues in Palestine. John passes upon all such waverers a terrible judgment in the next verse: "They loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God."

Though it is God who opens men's eyes to see his glory, it does not follow that men are entirely passive in the matter. They must not turn their backs upon his revelation or harden their hearts against his appeal. They must make an act of decision. They will have to choose between the glory of God and the substitute "glory" of men. The Pharisees had made their choice. They preferred the "glory" of men: they performed their acts of piety to be seen of men, and they had their reward—the adulation of men. (*Matt. 6: 1-5, 16.*) Others, like the rulers of the Gentiles, saw "glory" in lording it over their fellows. All these are very far from the true glory that is revealed by Christ in his lowliness. (See *John 13: 1-17.*) We have to choose between two very different ways of understanding glory.

The Glory of Jesus Christ

John leaves us in no doubt about the nature of the true glory, the "glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (*ch. 1: 14*), the glory of Jesus Christ. He speaks of the crucifixion as the "hour" of the glorification of the Son of God. His royal glory shines most brightly from his throne of the cross. "Father," says Jesus at the beginning of the great high-priestly prayer recorded in *ch. 17*, "the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee." Jesus has glorified God on the earth, having finished the work that the Father has given him to do (*v. 4*), and now the supreme hour of fulfillment has struck, the hour of the fulfillment of his divine glory: "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (*v. 5*). It is by the cross of Jesus that his disciples are enabled to share his glory: "The glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them" (*v. 22*). We are reminded of Jesus' question to James and John in *Mark 10: 38*, after they had asked that they might share his glory in his Kingdom. But they had not learned what "glory" involved; so Jesus asks, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" The true glory of Christians is to share the sufferings and lowliness of their Lord.

To suffer for the sake of Christ, to toil for his Kingdom, to minister to his little ones—these are the things which ought to be reckoned as the glory of Christians. They will not shirk the hardships and disappointments of this present life, for, as Paul says, "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. Do you understand what is meant by "the glory of God"?
2. Does it seem apparent to you that some people respond to the Gospel and others do not? Why is this a paradox?
3. What is the mystery of election?
4. What is the true nature of Christ's glory? What have suffering and hardship to do with it?

CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS TO GOLGOTHA, a panel of Ivan Mestrovic's "Life of Christ" series of walnut reliefs carved in his Syracuse studio, a sequence on which he has been at work since 1917.

nd more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (*II Cor. 4: 17;* cf. *Rom. 8: 18-21*). There was no ther way for Christ, the Son of God, to enter into his ory, save by the way of suffering, and the disciple not above his Lord. Of those who find it hard to believe that glory and suffering in this life must always be bound together, the risen Christ still asks, as he asked the disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?" (*Luke 24: 26*).

3

CHRIST THE KING

Read *John 18: 33 to 19: 22.*

We have seen, in the previous lesson, that the idea of glory must be completely transformed in the ght of the cross of Christ if we are to understand what he Word means in John's Gospel and in the New Tesament generally. The same is true of the idea of kingship.

The people of Palestine in New Testament times nust have taken their ideas of kingship from the petty ings of the Herod family. Herod Antipas, who ruled n the days of our Lord, though he was strictly *tetrarch* the word means ruler of a quarter of the land) and ot king, was nevertheless often called king in popular peech. He was not, however, respected by his subjects. They were Jews, and the Jews would not accept any nember of the Herod family as their rightful king. The Herods were no better than "the kings of the Gentiles" who tyrannized over their subjects. They were not in the true lineage of David, whose descendants alone could be rightful kings in Israel.

Many pious Jews looked for the coming of a king of David's line, who would restore David's city (Jerusalem) to its position of pre-eminence among the nations and re-establish Jewish independence once more. As David's great and splendid empire receded ever farther into the mists of history, and as foreign oppressors (like the Romans) laid increasing burdens upon their shoulders, the Jews naturally romanticized David and his kingship and came more and more to believe that a greater than David would soon arise to re-establish David's throne. Unlike the petty tyrants they knew, this king would be a righteous ruler, and he would extend the reign of God's law (which only Israel knew) far beyond the frontiers of Judea.

This was indeed a high and noble ideal, even though n the case of some (such as the Zealots) it tended to ose its nobility in a kind of fanatical nationalism.

But the Pharisees as a whole were not interested in nationalistic conquest of other nations; they were concerned primarily with the extension of the sway of God's law; their motives, according to their lights, were genuinely religious and not merely political. And so they were content to wait for the appearance of the expected Son of David. Unlike the Zealots, they would not try to force God's hand by raising the standard of revolt against the Romans. On the other hand, the Sadducees, the wealthy aristocratic class (who included the high priests and most of the members of the Sanhedrin), were opposed to all talk about a king, fearing that this might offend the Romans, to whose patronage they owed their privileges. (See *John 11: 48.*)

Christ came to fulfill these ancient expectations, to be Israel's King, its Messiah. But, as his glory was concealed from those too blind to comprehend it, so his Kingship was hidden from all except those who could understand the kind of king he was to be. John records how, after the feeding of the multitude, the excited people, believing, in their rather crude way, that the Messiah had arrived, were "about to come and take him by force, to make him king" (*ch. 6: 15*). But Jesus, perceiving their intention, withdrew again into the mountain, alone. This danger was always present during the ministry of Jesus; it was, in fact, on a political charge of pretending to be a king that his enemies were able to secure his condemnation by Pilate. From Mark's pointed accounts of how the disciples themselves were unable to accept the idea of a suffering Messiah, we can see how difficult it was even for them to understand the real meaning of Messiahship, Kingship, and glory. Before they could comprehend these things, the Son of God had to die.

Condemning the King

To those who looked for the outward trappings of royalty, such as the Herods loved to display, there was nothing in the figure of the Lord that would disclose his Kingship. In the passage that we have chosen for special attention (*John 18: 33 to 19: 22*) this truth is dramatically underlined. Jesus stands before Pilate in no kingly robe; he commands no soldiers, and his servants have not been trained to fight. Pilate is clearly surprised that such a one should have been handed over to him by the Jewish authorities on such a charge. Yet Jesus does not deny that he is a king. Indeed, his words imply that he is one: "My Kingdom is not of this world" (*ch. 18: 36*), to which Pilate replies, "So you are a king then?" Jesus answers explicitly: "You say (quite rightly) that I am a king; I was born to be king; I came into the world to claim the Kingship over it; my coming bears witness to the true nature of Kingship and to the essential Kingship

of truth." But Pilate, with his practical Roman mind, is in no mood to discuss philosophy, and he turns back to Jesus' accusers, with the suggestion that he should now release "the King of the Jews." His approach to them, however, was hardly conciliatory, since it contained the calculated insult of referring to Jesus as their "King." The accusers demand the release of Barabbas, whom John simply describes as a robber, but who Mark tells us had been the leader of a revolt that had actually led to bloodshed. (*Mark 15: 7.*) A rebel of this kind would, of course, have been highly popular with the Zealots; but the fact that the Sadducees apparently joined in the cry for his release shows how far their reason had been overwhelmed by their emotions.

Pilate therefore returns to make a further examination of the prisoner. This takes the form of scourging and buffeting by the soldiers—a barbarous cruelty doubtless designed to make the accused person more ready to confess his crime. It produces, however, no further evidence. (*John 19: 4.*)

Then comes the most dramatic incident of the trial scene. Pilate brings Jesus out into the full view of the crowd, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe that the soldiers had put on him. The words of Pilate are deliberately ambiguous, "Behold, the man!" They could mean nothing more than, "Look, here is the fellow!" But they are capable of a very different interpretation: "Look at this figure, and see Man as he stands in his true dignity and God-given Kingship." The crown of thorns and the purple robe were intended by the soldiers to be ironical, but the real irony of the situation is far more subtle than the coarse humor of the soldiers. The crown and the robe are the insignia, after all, not of a convicted pretender, but of the King of Kings, for whom the combined power and wisdom of Rome and of Jerusalem could find only the throne of the cross.

When the high priests renew their demand that Jesus should be crucified (*v. 6*), Pilate retires for a third examination of the prisoner. He is now beginning to feel apprehensive. He has heard the high priests say something about the "Son of God." Like all men of the world, he is rather superstitious, and there is something unaccountable, something mysterious, about the prisoner in his charge. As a Gentile he would have little idea what such expressions as "Son of God" might mean, but he was uneasy (*v. 8*). He knows that Caesar is popularly supposed at Rome to be a son of God, and that he, Pilate, is here to wield the authority of Caesar. But the prisoner speaks to him of an authority greater than Caesar's—an authority "from above" (*v. 11*). Therefore, Pilate now seeks to release Jesus. But once more he encounters the implacable resistance of the Jews. Those who a short time before had been clamoring for the release of Barabbas, the rebel against Caesar, are now posing as Caesar's friends. Even now Pilate cannot resist taunting them, "Shall I crucify your King?" and the chief men in Israel answer, "We have no king but Caesar." The apostasy of the Jews is complete. The high priests have finally renounced the reign of God and placed themselves under the demonic sovereignty of a foreign ruler.

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. What was so incomprehensible about Jesus' concept of his mission as king?
2. How is the scene in Pilate's courtroom symbolic of the human situation where Christ and the world conflict?
3. How are Pilate and the Jewish leaders really carrying out God's will? Does this absolve them from responsibility for the crime?

Now Pilate must write out the sentence. He keeps up his bitter joke to the end, inscribing it upon the title that is to be affixed to the cross: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Nor will he listen to the protest of the angry priests. "What I have written," he says, "I have written." He thinks that his action is his own, and he takes responsibility for it. In one sense, he is right. He had, as he himself remarked, power to release Jesus or to crucify him. He acted freely and of his own choice. But in another and a deeper sense, what Pilate wrote had been written centuries before—that the Son of Man must suffer. Incarnate Love must inevitably be crucified in a world of sin. The prophets of Israel had dimly discerned this truth long before Annas and Caiaphas and Pilate made themselves the instruments of human sin—and, at the same time, also the involuntary agents for the carrying out of the divine plan for the salvation of the entire world.

A New Kind of King

John's dramatic presentation of the trial of Jesus before Pilate inescapably poses for us the question, Is the true sovereignty or kingship Caesar's or Christ's? We are enabled to see what earthly conceptions of kingship are involved in the picture of Pilate, and we are given a picture of the divine Kingship in the Person of the prisoner before him. John doubtless wishes us to ask ourselves which of these two authorities is to be the lord of our lives. The one has all the trappings of earthly pomp and power; it is maintained by soldiers and is surrounded by flatterers. The other is a Kingship not of this world; it does not need the trappings or the protection of earthly power. It is the Kingship of One who takes a towel and washes his disciples' feet. It is the Kingship of One who would rule not by coercion but by love, the Kingship of One who calls his subjects not servants but friends. (*Ch. 15: 15.*) It is the Kingship of One who has laid down his life for his friends. (*V. 13.*) John wishes us to realize that this is indeed Kingship, and that Jesus of Nazareth is not only "King of the Jews" but also King of *all* the world. Yet it is not enough to recognize that

esus is the King of all the world; we must go one step urther, or rather, nearer. We must each say that Jesus *my* King, and give to him the whole of our allegiance, bedience, and love.

The Kingship of Christ in John's Gospel is indeed Kingship not of this world. (The word translated kingdom" in *ch. 18: 36* is more accurately rendered kingship," "sovereignty," or "reign.") It stands bove all earthly political order and all earthly rule. lthough Pilate is the "governor" (procurator) and esus is the prisoner, it is clear that it is Pilate who is eing judged, not Jesus; the representative of Caesar standing in the presence of One who is Caesar's King. nd throughout John's Gospel Jesus is represented as king. He is no weak victim of circumstances, being uffeted by forces that he cannot control. He is in command of the situation all the time. Pilate could have "no power against him, except it were given him from above" (*ch. 19: 11*); and Jesus is One with the power from above. He has come from above to do just what he does, and Caiaphas and Pilate and the rest are merely the involuntary agents of his sovereign will. What happens does not happen in spite of Jesus and the power from above, but because of it. The Scripture must be fulfilled; the divine plan for man's salvation must be carried out. The "hour" of God's triumph over man's sin has arrived—the hour of the glorification of the divine Son. Hence, in John's Gospel, Jesus goes to his Passion not as a helpless martyr to his agony, but as a king to his crowning; and in his triumphal enthronement upon the cross, the utter glory and Kingship of God are revealed.

4

CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD

Read *John 1: 19-42.*

JOHN THE BAPTIST is one of the important witnesses to Jesus Christ. When he speaks, saying who Jesus s, we would do well to listen, for our Lord had a high stimate of him. (*Luke 7: 28; 16: 16.*) The writer of his Fourth Gospel likewise regards the Baptist's words as carrying great weight, for he gives him a prominent place at the beginning of his Gospel. Furthermore, John the Baptist himself recognizes that he occupies an important position in relation to Jesus Christ. He considers himself to be the figure about whom Isaiah (*ch. 40: 3*) has prophesied, the one sent to prepare the way of the Lord. He declares himself to have been sent by the Spirit of God to baptize with water (*John 1: 33*); and the same Spirit reveals to him who the Messiah is (*v. 32*). The Baptist is none other than the turning point in history, the dividing of the Old Age of the Law and the Prophets from the New Age of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God. John is more than a preacher and more than a prophet: he is the very symbol or sign of the fulfillment of God's age-long purpose. (See *Luke 16: 16.*)

Therefore, who is Jesus, according to this, his herald and forerunner? Appropriately enough, the man who stands on the line between the Old Testament and the New reaches back into the imagery of the past to describe this new creature: Jesus Christ is *the Lamb of God.*

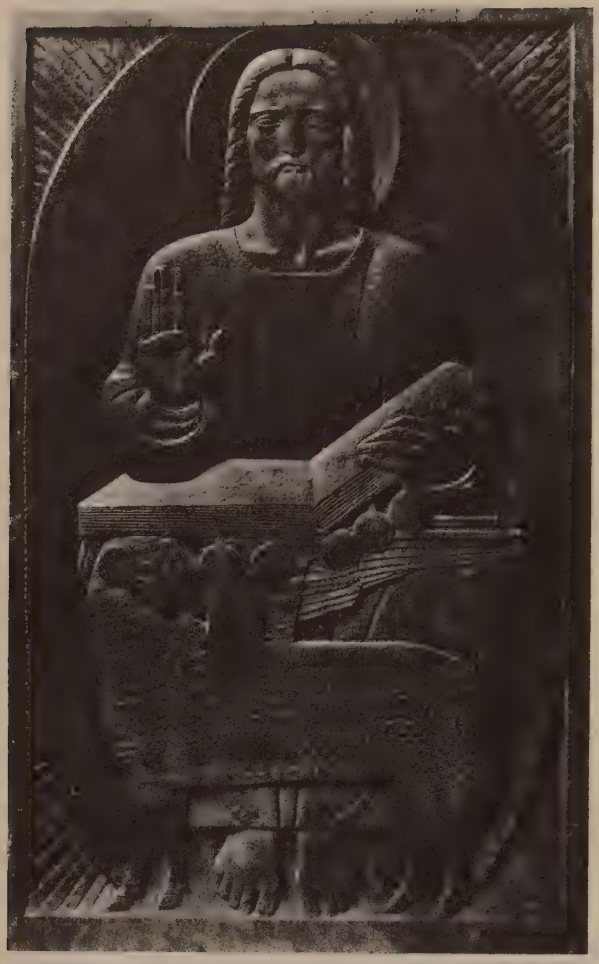
Now, the Baptizer, as he himself would have it, steps from the scene, and our interest is in what he has said and the One to whom he has pointed. What does it mean that Christ is the Lamb of God? This is our consideration in this lesson.

This term does not come from the Baptizer alone. It s the characteristic term used by the Evangelist who wrote this Fourth Gospel to describe the atonement or redemption. This great Christian truth—that Christ has taken away the sins of the world—is, of course, taught by every writer in the New Testament, but each presents it in his own way. And behind the concept of Christ as the Lamb of God there is a wealth of symbolism, drawn from Jewish religious ideas and practices, that was full of meaning to the earliest Christians, but is largely unfamiliar to us in these modern days. It is, therefore, well worth our while to concentrate our attention on the imagery that lies behind the Evangelist's use of this phrase.

The Innocent Victim at the Sacrifice

In the Old Testament, as in other literature, the lamb is often the symbol of guilelessness and innocence. Thus, Jeremiah, in the midst of his enemies, compares himself to a lamb: "I was like a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me" (*Jer. 11: 19*). Or again, in the great poem in Isaiah about the Suffering Servant of the Lord, we read, "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter . . . he opened not his mouth" (*Isa. 53: 7*). Undoubtedly, the expression "Lamb of God," as applied to Christ, contains a reference to his innocence, his sinlessness, and his vicarious suffering as the Servant of the Lord. (Cf. *Acts 8: 32.*)

But there is a further and deeper implication than this. It is to be found in the fact that lambs were constantly offered as victims in the Temple sacrifices. Today (largely as a result of the triumph of Christianity) the whole idea of animal sacrifice is unfamiliar and distinctly repugnant to us; however, unless we make an effort to think ourselves back into the mental habits and religious practices of the first century, we shall not understand the real meaning of the New Tes-



THE LAMB OF GOD, completed in Syracuse in May, 1950, is the final panel of Mestrovic's "Life of Christ" series of walnut reliefs.

tament writers. The Jews were, in those days, conscious of their sinfulness in a way in which, alas, we modern folks usually are not. Their law prescribed the offering of sacrifices that would "cover," or atone for, sin. Every morning and every evening a lamb "without blemish" was offered in the Temple as "a continual burnt-offering" in obedience to the law of Moses. (See *Num. 28: 3-6.*) At many other times and at all important feasts and seasons, lambs were offered—seven on each day of Passover week. A life must be substituted for human lives forfeited by sin. It was hoped that in this way the sins of devout Israelites would be taken away. Of course, it was a vain hope; and the prophets of Israel had always been aware in their hearts of the truth that a New Testament writer states—that "it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (*Heb. 10: 4*). Such sacrifices, however costly and however frequent, could not "cleanse the conscience from dead works" (*ch. 9: 14*).

But the Christian Church had found in Christ a power that could and did cleanse the guilty conscience, that took away sins and restored the broken relationship between sinful man and the Holy God. Christ had done what all the sacrifices of the law of Moses could never do. Jesus had died, "the righteous for the unrighteous" (*I Peter 3: 18*), and his death had done what all the deaths of the animal victims of the sacrifices could never do—it had assured guilty souls of forgiveness. This is how a New Testament writer expresses the matter, using (as was natural for him) the language of sacrifice: "Ye were redeemed . . . from your vain manner of life . . . with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (*ch. 1: 18, 19*). Henceforward, no more Temple sacrifices were necessary. Christ had made the one true sacrifice and so had abolished sacrifice forever. He had paid to God the obedience that men owed but could never offer; he had rendered an obedience "even unto death." He had done as man what man could never have done for himself. It is not surprising that the New Testament writers, brought up within the sacrificial system of Old Testament religion, should have expressed this truth in terms of the system of worship with which they were familiar. Christ, says the writer to the Hebrews, abolished sacrifice "once for all, when he offered up himself" (*Heb. 7: 27*).

God Provides His Own Offering

All this is implied in the phrase "the Lamb of God." The Lamb of God has taken away the sins of the world in a way in which the lambs of the daily burnt-offering never could. We should note carefully the meaning of the phrase "the Lamb *of God*": it means "the Lamb from God," the Lamb provided by God. Thus, another expectation of the Old Testament is fulfilled, the hope expressed in the deeply symbolical story of Abraham's offering of Isaac: "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering" (*Gen. 22: 8*). Man's sin is so great that no price that we could ever pay—not even that of a human sacrifice, not even the sacrifice of a beloved son, like Isaac—could ever redeem our guilty souls.

If a man is to be redeemed, God alone can redeem him. The Lamb without blemish, the perfect, infinitely precious offering that can take away the sins of the world, must be provided by God. But this provision has already been made by the loving God. It had been intended by him since long before Abraham's day; it had, indeed, been planned since before the foundation of the world. This insight is expressed in the book of Revelation, where no less than twenty-seven times Christ is called "the Lamb"—but he is "the Lamb slain," "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." Christ is now exalted in glory; the Lamb sits upon the throne (*Rev. 22: 3*); but, in the seer's vision, he is always "the Lamb that hath been slain." The way by which sinners reach the throne of his glory is the way of his suffering and dying:

> "Hath He marks to lead me to Him,
> If He be my Guide?
> 'In His feet and hands are wound prints,
> And His side.' "

he Passover Lamb

But there is still a further meaning behind the use the title "Lamb of God" in the Fourth Gospel. The ay in which the Evangelist tells the story of the crucixion makes this clear. He is thinking of the Passover mb, the lamb killed and eaten at the Passover as a lemn memorial of Israel's deliverance from bondage Egypt. As the story of the Passion of Jesus is unlded, it becomes clear that John intends us to see a eeply symbolical meaning in the hour at which the rucifixion took place. "It was the Preparation of the assover," he tells us; "it was about the sixth hour," hen Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified. (*John 9: 14.*) It was the very hour at which the Passover mbs were being slaughtered in preparation for the ast. Again, the Evangelist carefully tells us (*vs. 33, 6*) that the soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus on ne cross because he was already dead, and he sees in nis a deeply symbolic significance: the law had commanded that not a bone of the Passover lamb should e broken (*Ex. 12: 46*). Christ, so the Evangelist is elling us, is the Christian Passover Lamb: the deverance that he assures is a far greater deliverance nan the redemption from Egypt. The Jewish Passover ommemorated the deliverance of Israel when, at the oing out from Egypt, Jehovah had visited the land nd *passed over* the houses whose doorposts had been tained with the blood of a lamb; the Christian Passver, or Easter, commemorates the deliverance from in and death of the New Israel, the company of those vho have "washed their robes, and made them white n the blood of the Lamb." (*Rev. 7: 14*). We may reind ourselves that Paul also thinks of Christ as the Christian Passover Lamb: "Our passover also hath een sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the east" (*I Cor. 5: 7, 8*).

The Lord's Supper

All these ideas and associations lie behind the title f "Lamb of God," which, in the Fourth Gospel, the Baptist gives to Jesus. When once we take the trouble o think ourselves back into the language and imagery f apostolic times, and so really begin to appreciate the rue riches of the Bible, we become aware that the title arries within it a tremendous affirmation concerning he Person of Christ and the atonement that he has rought for man. As the Evangelist is well aware (see *ohn, ch. 6*), all these ideas are present every time the Christian Church gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, r Lord's Supper. For the Church's Eucharist is the Christian Passover meal, at which we commemorate ur deliverance from sin and death, through the sacrice and rising again of Him who was sent forth by God o pay the price for us, "the Lamb of God, that taketh way the sin of the world!" In the Eucharist the Church shows forth "the Lord's death till he come" *I Cor. 11: 26*), making real, making present, but not epeating, that one, true, once-for-all sacrifice of the

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. What is the relation between Christ and the lamb of the Temple sacrifice?
2. Is there a relationship between the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and the story of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac in *Gen. 22: 1-19?*
3. In what way is Christ the Passover lamb? What has this to do with our sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

Lamb which God has provided for us, making available for our souls the mercy, pardon, and peace with God that the offering of Calvary has won for us.

> "One offering, single and complete,
> With lips and heart we say;
> But what he never can repeat
> He shows forth day by day."

The teaching on the atonement characteristic of this Gospel is thus set forth in the language of sacrifice under the figure or symbol of Christ as the Lamb of God. It is with this language and symbolism in mind that the Church, calling to mind the great mystery of redemption, renders worship "unto him that sitteth on the throne" (*Rev. 5: 13*). "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing." (*V. 12.*) And how fitting it is that the ancient chant of the Church, the *Gloria in Excelsis,* should so powerfully and movingly express our adoration of the "Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ: O Lord God, Lamb of God, . . . that takest away the sins of the world."

The Word of the Crucified

The Sower went forth to sow,
Planted the seed and died;
The springtime came and, lo,
The seed was multiplied.
No tares of hate and greed,
Thistle and thorn of strife,
No stony soil, this seed
Of righteousness and life
Could crowd, destroy. It grew,
And the comfort of its shade
The tired and weary knew;
They blessed the One who laid
His manhood down to sow;
They in His name spread wide
The seed that all might know
The word of the Crucified.

—Edith Dunn Bolar.

CHRIST THE JUDGE OF THE WORLD

Read *John 3: 16-21.*

We might equally well have entitled this lesson "Christ the Light of the World." As we shall notice, John develops his teaching about judgment by means of his favorite metaphor of light. But perhaps it will give a more balanced presentation of the whole message of John if, in this lesson, we direct our attention chiefly toward what he teaches about judgment, especially since, in the previous lesson, we have considered his teaching about salvation. Salvation and judgment are not contradictory ideas, as John understands them; they are complementary to each other, and the one implies the other. As we shall see, they are complementary in the sense that light and darkness are complementary: we should not really understand what light is unless we had experienced darkness, and we should know nothing at all about darkness if we had always lived in the light. By the same token, John's teaching is that Christ is both the Saviour and the Judge of the world. We should never know him as Saviour unless we also knew his righteous judgments, and those who will not accept him as their Saviour must encounter him as their Judge.

The Light That Dispels the Darkness

Let us begin by studying the way in which John thinks of light and darkness. We must try to think ourselves back into a world in which there was no artificial light, such as that produced by electricity, which, in our age, can turn night into day. The only artificial lights that were available in John's time were candles and primitive oil lamps. They were not much used to work by in the evenings: "We must work . . . while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (*John 9: 4*). Honest men need daylight for their toil; it is only burglars and malefactors who can work in darkness. In the nighttime evil men and beasts of prey are abroad; honest men are asleep in their homes. There was no street-lighting in the villages and cities of Palestine after dark. Thus, *night* and *darkness* would suggest to the imagination of folk in the ancient world something far more sinister and evil than they do to us. Look at the dramatic effect with which John uses the metaphor of darkness at the conclusion of his narrative of the hasty departure of Judas at the Last Supper: "Having received the sop [he] went out straightway: and it was night" (*ch. 13: 30*).

Moreover, the ancient world knew nothing of any modern scientific ideas about darkness being only the absence of light and thus being only a kind of negative quality. To the men of the first century, darkness was something positive, a sinister reality that struggled against the light and was locked in endless combat with it. (See *ch. 1: 5.*) If, with our imagination, we shall try to feel the darkness, as the ancient peoples must have felt it, we shall understand better the force of the metaphor of light in John and in the rest of the New Testament.

The sun was the only strong and steady light that the ancient world knew, and when John speaks of "light" he means, of course, daylight, the light of the sun. When he speaks of Christ as "the light of the world," he means that Christ is to the souls of men what sunlight is to their physical eyes. Those who are without Christ are like men groping in the darkness of night.

It is not surprising that throughout Christian history the advent of Christ has been likened to the coming of the light. Indeed, it appears probable that one reason for choosing December 25 as Christmas Day was that in pagan religion the winter solstice was regarded as the birthday of the sun; at Rome, December 25 was celebrated as the festival of the nativity of Sol Invictus. The Church, unable to stamp out this popular holiday, baptized it as the Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness. And how appropriate the image of light was for the Christian teaching! The birth of Jesus Christ was the coming of the light—the light that was to illumine the dark places of the earth, banish the shadows of ignorance and superstition, and dispel the clouds of ignorance and sin. John makes striking use of this metaphor of the coming of the light in his opening sentences: "The life [of Christ] was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. . . . There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world" (*ch. 1: 4, 5, 9*). Christ is the light in which, if a man will walk, he will not stumble. (*Ch. 11: 9.*)

Light Uncovers the Darkness

But John also makes use of the metaphor of light to teach another great Biblical truth—that which is summed up by the word "judgment." In certain kinds of watered-down modern Christianity, the idea of judgment is unconsciously neglected, even if it is not deliberately rejected. Sometimes, nowadays, Christianity is presented in such a way as to suggest that we have all outgrown the notion of a divine judgment. It is true that most thoughtful Christians today repudiate certain medieval or old-fashioned pictures and metaphors that crudely represent judgment under such figures as those of the Great Assize, the Recording

ngel, and the flames of hell. But we must not mistake e outward form for the thing itself. Let us by all eans throw away outmoded and sub-Christian images at obscure the central truth of the love of God (*ch. 16*). But let us not be hasty in dispensing with great iblical themes, like that of judgment, which surely ntain teaching that we disregard at the peril of our uls.

In the passage from John that we have selected for ecial attention in this lesson (*ch. 3: 16-21*), the vangelist deals with the themes of God's love and an's sin, of light and darkness, of salvation and judgent. He clearly shows us how each of these pairs of pposites is bound up with the other. He starts with e central affirmation of the whole New Testament, at "God so loved the world" that he sent his unique n to save those who would believe on him from deruction and to bring to them eternal life. (*V. 16*). n order that we may be clear about the purpose beind the coming of the Son of God into the world, he es on to say explicitly that Christ did not come for e purpose of judgment, but for the purpose of salvaon; he did not come to condemn us, but to reconcile s to God (*v. 17*). Nevertheless, by the very fact of s having come, the world is judged: "This is the dgment, that the light is come into the world, and en loved the darkness rather than the light; for their orks were evil" (*v. 19*). The metaphor is a simple ne. Burglars wait until after it is dark before they o out to their evil work. They do not turn on all ne lights in the house that they are robbing; they aturally prefer the darkness which will conceal their ctivities. But if they are surprised at their work by meone suddenly turning on the light, they stand conemned and defenseless (*v. 20*). So the coming of hrist into the world inevitably shows up the sinfulss of men; judged by the light of his holiness, the works" of all of us are revealed for what they are, nd we stand convicted. The coming of Christ into our nful human world was like the break of day. Those ho love the light greet his coming; the rest scurry ack to their dens and lurking-places, where they can ide. (See *Ps. 104: 22.*)

Though it was not with the object of judgment that esus Christ came into the world, his coming inevitaly meant the showing up of the deeds of darkness. s we saw in a previous lesson, Pilate, though nomially judge at the trial of Jesus, was himself the one ho was judged. Small wonder that evil men, like nnas and Caiaphas and their friends, should have ied to extinguish the light. But the light shone in the arkness, and the darkness was not able to overcome it. he high triumph of the gospel of Christ is this: when last his enemies succeeded in killing him, when there as darkness over all the earth (*Mark 15: 33*), when seemed to his disciples that the light had been finally ut out, then, at that very moment, the light shone rth from Calvary down all the succeeding ages to veal not the folly, cruelty, and wickedness of men,

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. What are Christ's functions as "the light of the world"?
2. In your opinion, why have some people tried to water down as much as possible the idea of judgment in their theology?
3. Why must the love of God in Christ be kept closely linked with God's judgment?

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but rather the wisdom, mercy, and goodness of God. John represents Calvary as the judgment of the whole world and of all human history—God's final verdict on human sin and on all the forces of evil: "The prince of this world hath been judged" (*John 16: 11*).

We Are All Judged

Of course, it was not only Herod and Pilate and Caiaphas and Judas who were shown up and convicted by the light. It was all the men and women upon whom the light shone—including not only folks like Zacchaeus and Mary Magdalene, but also disciples like Peter and the other apostles. They knew that they were standing in the light of Christ's holiness and were judged by it. (See *Luke 5: 8.*) And, for that matter, it is not only those who met Jesus in the flesh who are judged by him; it is people of every place and time—people like ourselves, in fact, including ourselves. We too are judged by whether we receive the light or turn our backs upon it. But how dare we, sinners, stand in the light of Christ's presence? Will it not shrivel us up with its brightness? John gives us our reassurance: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (*I John 1: 9*). All we have to do is to believe God's promise. This is what John means when he says, "He that believeth on him is not judged [condemned]: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (*John 3: 18*). Or, again, in another place: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness" (*ch. 12: 46*). The light that judges us also purifies us. When we come in penitence and trust to the light of Christ's presence, all the dark places in our lives and all the shadows cast by our sins are flooded with the searchlight of Christ's glory and are utterly dispersed, as the rising sun puts to flight the shadows of the night.

We must, therefore, come to Christ, the true light, hiding nothing, allowing his radiance to banish every shadow that is cast by the half-light of the weak and flickering flames of our own poor righteousness. When we come to walk in his light, we no longer need our old lamps, the broken lights of our own virtue or merits. We can throw away our candles when the daylight comes. For now "the sun of righteousness is arisen with healing in its wings" (*Mal. 4: 2*): Christ is our Sun and Christ our Righteousness.

He Judges in Love

John's teaching is thus the same as that of Paul: "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day. . . ." (*Rom. 13: 12, 13*). The world is already judged: judgment day was the day on which Christ died for our salvation. Every moment of our lives is a moment of judgment for us, because it is a moment of decision, of believing or unbelieving. The final disclosure of God's judgment yet remains for the future, when the verdict now being passed will be pronounced upon us; meanwhile, however, we determine by our decisions now what that future judgment will be.

Christ is the Judge. He is also the standard by which we are judged. But, if we accept him, he is our righteousness and our salvation. The Father, in giving all judgment to the Son, has established the certainty that love is the criterion and the object of judgment. (*John 5: 22.*) The Son says to us: "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (*vs. 24, 25*). Paul uses language similar to these words of John when he writes to the Ephesians: "All things when they are reproved are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee." (*Eph. 5: 13, 14.*)

6

THE SIGN OF THE EMPTY TOMB

Read *John, ch. 20.*

With this lesson we turn from concepts describing the Person of Christ to those which have to do with his work among believers. His supreme work for us all is, of course, his resurrection from the dead, whereby he has "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light." It is appropriate, therefore, that this section of our study should consider first his resurrection.

THE story of the resurrection of Jesus is told by John in *ch. 20*. It looks as if originally the Gospel ended with this chapter; *vs. 30* and *31* seem rather like a definite conclusion, in which the author implies that, though he knows much more than he has written, he is now going to bring his account to a close. He has selected what he considers to be the chief matters that demonstrate his thesis: that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), the unique Son of God. He has laid bare the grounds for belief in him, and he has written these matters down in order that his readers may understand and possess this belief, and so have life—eternal life—through the name of Jesus. But in *ch. 21* there is a fresh beginning. Therefore, many scholars look upon this chapter as a kind of appendix to the Gospel, perhaps written at a later time, but undoubtedly by the same hand.

The Divine Event

The resurrection of Jesus is, of course, the great climax to which the whole Gospel story is leading. Without this climax, if the story of Jesus had simply ended with his burial in the garden tomb, it would have been the saddest story ever told. It would have been a story of a brave and good man, who had preached peace and love to the world, and who had been cruelly done to death by means of the most callous and cynical judicial murder that history records. It would have been just another of those sickening martyrdoms of brave and noble men with which we are unhappily so familiar. It would have filled us with despair for human justice and for the future of the human race. It would have been better to forget it, to try to blot it out from the annals of mankind, for it could have contained no gospel, no assurance of better things to come. But the Gospel writers do not tell the story of the death of Jesus as the story of the martyrdom of a good and brave man. They take the goodness of Jesus for granted and do not pause to dwell upon his heroism. They are concerned with something much more important than a moving tale of human injustice and human bravery. This is especially true of John's Gospel. We have noted (in Lesson 2) how John presents the Passion story—the story of Jesus' suffering and death—as the story of his entering into his glory; we have noted, too (in Lesson 3), how in John's Gospel Jesus goes to his Passion not as a helpless martyr to his agony, but as a king to his crowning. The story moves along inevitably to its climax of triumph and victory.

In this Gospel the story of the Passion and the story of the resurrection are perfectly integrated; they are not two stories, but one. The death of Christ is his glorification because it is the necessary preliminary to the resurrection. In a similar way the resurrection triumph shines through every chapter in the Gospel. The Gospel story is being told throughout from the point of view of the resurrection, and the light of inevitable victory suffuses every part of it. The writer of the Gospel at the end of the first century knows the reality of the experience of the risen Christ in his

hurch, and he tells the whole narrative in the light of is resurrection experience. The Lord who was born on the earth, hailed by the Baptist, rejected by the ws, betrayed by Iscariot, put to death by Pilate—is same Jesus was none other than the risen Lord, no was now known and adored by the great fellowship his faithful disciples. The events of his life upon rth could be rightly understood only from the standint of his resurrection. This is precisely how John es to help us to understand the story of the Jesus of story. Even as a man upon earth, he was "the resurction, and the life."

onqueror of Death

It is in *ch. 11,* the story of the raising of Lazarus, at John most clearly brings home to us this truth. hat is the sign, the underlying meaning, of this mirle? It is a thing of wonder that Lazarus, a good friend our Lord, could be brought back to life; but there a significance to the act of resurrection far deeper an its meaning as a display of supernatural power. hat does John want us to learn from it?

In this story Jesus is set forth as "the resurrection, nd the life" (*v. 25*). He is himself the conqueror of eath and the means by which others, those who beeve in him, are delivered from death. "If thou hadst een here," said Martha, "my brother had not died." ut Jesus *is* here: he is always with us, as the victor ver death and as our assurance of eternal life. Death, ke the death of Lazarus, affords a trial of our faith n him. It is tragic, sad, and poignant, and it must not e treated lightly. "Jesus wept," even though he knew hat death was actually vanquished. It is our faith in hrist, and this alone, which can deprive "the king of errors" of all his power to afflict and affright us. Jesus s the conqueror of death.

And he demonstrates this conquering power not nerely by his words but by his deeds. All miracles, incluing his raisings of the dead, are the signs that he as broken the power of sin and death. This is the truth hich is brought out so dramatically in *vs. 47-53:* It s because of the mighty acts which Jesus works that is enemies finally resolve to destroy him. Had he nerely used words, they would have left him alone. Beng cynics, they had a profound contempt for the power f words, sermons, and exhortations. If Jesus had nerely proclaimed the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, they would not have crucified him; such idealsm, they doubtless thought, was at worst harmless nnacy. It was because Jesus demonstrated by his nighty works the truth of his claim to be the resurrecion and the life that they had to take action: "If we et him thus alone, all men will believe on him. . . ." The Lazarus story tells us that Jesus was crucified not ecause he preached the gospel of love, but because he vorked the miracles of the Kingdom of God. He gave roof by his mighty acts that he was indeed the Mesiah, the King of Israel. The Sadducees could not tolerte this: "The Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. . . . So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death." The crucifixion of Jesus is the clearest proof that he worked the works of God, the miracles of the Messiah.

The parallel with the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus himself is obvious. Both are demonstrations of the fact that he is the resurrection and the life. In one case, he illustrates this truth by restoring a beloved friend to life; in the other, he illustrates it by himself returning from death. Had the story of Jesus ended with the account of his burial in the tomb, we should never even have heard of his name. It would not have been repeated, told and retold, as the good news of the Church of God, for there would never have been a Church at all. The disciples who had fled would never have gathered together again. The Sermon on the Mount would long since have been forgotten, for it would never have been written down. But the story of Jesus did not end with the burial in the garden. As John most clearly shows, there was implicit in that story at every stage of its development the good news of the resurrection. It is this which gives coherence to every part of it. It is because the Jesus of whom we read in *chs. 1 to 19* is all the time "the resurrection, and the life" that such a story could have been written.

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. Can you see how the event of Jesus' resurrection infuses the whole Gospel of John and colors everything he writes?
2. What is the relationship between the raising of Lazarus and Jesus' own resurrection?
3. Read over *John, ch. 20,* and find what we may learn for our faith from the experience of the early believers.

He Appears in the Midst of Them

The whole Gospel of John thus implies the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. The author has brought out its significance by the terms in which he has told the narrative from the beginning. Hence, when he comes to the climax of *ch. 20,* he is able to tell the story of the resurrection in a direct and simple way, without pausing to underline its meaning and symbolism. We already know about and believe in this event, for it has been in every page we have read before.

He gives us a graphic account of the visit of Mary Magdalene to the tomb and the subsequent discovery by Peter and the "other disciple" of the fact that it was empty. Then follows the hauntingly beautiful story of the encounter of Mary in the garden with her risen Lord.

This episode reminds us not merely that the resurrection of Jesus is a general truth but that it must become for each of us a personal one. He must be for me *my* "Master"—my personal Lord and Saviour. The risen Christ speaks to each one of us by name, just as

he spoke to Mary. Like Mary, we cannot yet fully grasp him and embrace him, for here, in this life, it is by faith that we may know him. But, like Mary, we too receive from him his commission—to go to our brethren with the news that he is risen and is ascended to the throne of God.

John does not tell the story of the ascension of Christ, but as with the resurrection, his whole Gospel proclaims the truth of the exalted Christ, reigning in glory by the Father's side. The ascended Christ is now with the Father in heaven, and yet he is ever with his disciples upon the earth, for where his Spirit is, there is he. As we shall see in Lesson 12, Christ himself comes to us with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, whom he sends to us.

This truth is emphasized in the next episode—the story of Jesus' appearance to his disciples when the doors were shut on the evening of the first Easter. In the midst of their doubts and fears, he brings peace and gladness. He commissions them for the work that he gives them to do. They are to continue his ministry of mediating God's forgiveness to the world of men. (*Ch. 20: 21-23.*) Christ had come to reconcile sinners to God; his disciples are now commissioned to continue this ministry. Moreover, they are empowered by the gift of the Holy Spirit to fulfill this commission. They do not go out in their own strength, but in the might of the Spirit of Christ. This is the commissioning which every member of Christ's Church receives, and each is endowed with his appropriate gift of the Holy Spirit to enable him to discharge the task that he could not have done in his own strength. (See *I Cor. 12: 4-11.*)

In his account of the experiences that the disciples had after the resurrection, John seems to be telescoping the events that, in Luke and The Acts, occupy the whole period from Easter to Pentecost. In John's Gospel, the disciples do not have to wait forty days before the Spirit is given. John is bringing out in his own way a most important truth: It is the risen Christ who, in the power of his resurrection, bestows on us the gift of his Spirit and strengthens us to perform the commission that he gives to us. The disciples of Christ go forth to their task of reconciliation in the power of Christ's resurrection.

Our Own Encounter

The chapter—and perhaps the original draft of the Gospel—concludes with the episode of Thomas and his doubts. It is possible to doubt the accounts of other people concerning their experiences, as Thomas doubted the word of his fellow disciples. The resurrection of the Lord should not remain for Christians merely a matter of other people's experience, of questions of evidence and probability. It is one's own personal encounter with the risen Lord that alone will settle the matter decisively, as it did for Thomas. When we come to know in our own experience that the Lord is risen indeed, we shall, like Thomas, find that all our doubts and intellectual difficulties are resolved, and with Thomas we shall say, "*My* Lord and *my* God." Blessed indeed are they who have not seen, who do not ask for proofs and evidences, but who know in their hearts that Christ is the resurrection and the life of all the faithful.

THE ASCENSION, a reredos panel in St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, York, Pa.

Prayer for Ascension Day

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory."

"Almighty God, whose blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ ascended far above all heavens that He might fill all things: mercifully give us faith to perceive that according to His promise He abideth with His Church on earth, even to the end of the world; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."—*The Book of Common Worship* (1946).

THE CHURCH: THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

Read *John 10: 1-18; 15: 1-8.*

OHN's Gospel does not actually use the word "Church." Nevertheless, the idea and the fact of e Church are constantly present in the thought of the iter. He tells us Christ has come into the world with e express purpose of gathering into one body, or fel-wship, or flock, or Church, all those who would hear od's call and obey his voice. It was for this end that sus came and died—"that he might also gather to-ther into one the children of God that are scattered road" (*John 11: 52*). Hence, John places tremen-us emphasis upon the unity of Christ's disciples; ey are to live in the closest fellowship, in a unity as al as that of Christ and the Father. In the great high-iestly prayer of Christ on behalf of his disciples, on e night on which he was betrayed, Jesus prays "that ey may be one, even as we are one" (*ch. 17: 22*). heir unity is to be a sign to the world of the truth the Christian gospel; by it all men are to know that hrist came forth from the Father.

Thus, the oneness of Christ's disciples, or, as we ight say, the unity of the whole Church of God, is ot an optional matter about which we may suit our vn convenience. It is the heart of the Gospel teach-g; it is an essential feature of the life of Christians. nity is an essential mark of the Church. It is the eans by which the world will come to accept the truth f the revelation of God in Christ, the truth that Christ come forth from God.

It follows from this that the Christian gospel cannot e effectively preached to the world by a disunited hurch, and that a precondition of evangelization is hurch unity. Christians cannot and ought not to be ontent with the present state of our separated churches" or denominations if they take seriously the ords of Christ's prayer: "that they may all be one; ven as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they lso may be in us: that the world may believe that thou idst send me" (*v. 21*). According to the teaching of ohn's Gospel, and to that of the whole New Testa-ent, there can be only one Church. The existence of everal "churches" side by side is unthinkable in New estament times. Christ's purpose in coming into the orld was to gather into one the scattered children of od.

This teaching about the unity of Christ's disciples dealt with in various ways by the writer of John's ospel. One of these is the metaphor of the shepherd nd the sheepfold in *ch. 10;* another is the metaphor of ne vine and the branches in *ch. 15*. But we can detect, we read the words carefully, this deep concern for the unity of all Christian people throughout the Gospel; and we can have little doubt that John is right in setting it forth as a matter that received great emphasis in the teaching that Jesus gave to his disciples.

The Shepherd and the Sheep

The metaphor of the shepherd and the sheep is a simple and obvious one. We know, from the parable in *Luke 15: 3-7,* that Jesus had likened himself to a shepherd who goes out to seek his lost and wandering sheep. Not content with the ninety-nine safely gathered into the fold, the shepherd goes out to search for the hundredth sheep, which is missing; and when he has found it, he rejoices over it, and it gives him more joy than he finds in all the other ninety-nine that have not strayed! Such is the love of God and his joy over one repentant sinner. The emphasis in John's use of the metaphor is slightly different; it is not so much upon the single individual as upon the flock as a whole. But, even so, the shepherd knows his sheep and calls each one by its name (*ch. 10: 3*). The Church, the fellowship of the disciples, follows Christ, as the flock follows the shepherd (in the East the shepherd *leads* his sheep). Having learned to love the good shepherd, they will not follow a stranger.

At the end of the first century, when John was writing, the Church was in great danger from false teachers who did not speak with the voice of Christ; these false teachers created disunity and caused many to stray from the Church's fellowship. Heretical and divisive bodies were set up—Gnostics, Docetists, and so on. In the Epistles of John we find many warnings about these false teachers, who are called "antichrists": "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us" (*I John 2: 19*); "Many deceivers are gone forth into the world" (*II John 7*). The same metaphor of the flock is used by Paul in *Acts 20: 29, 30,* when he warns the elders at Miletus: "After my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock . . . to draw away the disciples after them." From such passages as *II Tim., ch. 3,* we also learn that the later New Testament Church was indeed afflicted by unscrupulous false teachers who impaired the unity and peace of the Church.

Therefore, John, writing at the end of the New Testament period, is well aware of this danger from false shepherds—those who do not enter into the Church's pastoral ministry by the normal "door," through regular selection and ordination, but who climb in some other way, like thieves and robbers (*John 10: 1*). Christians must listen for the authentic

accents of Christ's voice and eschew all who speak in unfamiliar tones and seek to draw away the faithful from their true allegiance. Christ is the one true "door" that leads to salvation, to the good pastures; the false teachers, who, like thieves, have made holes in the wall, will lead the sheep to their destruction. Christ, and he alone, is the bringer of life—the abundant life. (*V. 10.*)

The truth that Christ is the one true Shepherd may be known from the fact that he is the crucified One. The other "shepherds" did not give their lives for the sheep. This is the supreme test; the "hireling" runs away at the approach of danger; Christ did not flinch, even from the cross, and this is the proof that he loves us and is the true Shepherd of our souls. He is "the good shepherd," because he voluntarily gave his life for the sake of the sheep. (*Vs. 15, 17, 18.*)

The whole metaphor would have a grim reality in the days when John was writing his Gospel. The Church was enduring persecution, and all its members were in danger of their lives. This was a testing time for the Church's true shepherds or pastors; the false teachers, the "hirelings," desert their flock in the moment of danger, but the true pastors are they who, following the example of Christ, do not run away but are ready to lay down their lives for the sheep in the day of persecution.

In this passage the unity of the Church of Christ is clearly emphasized. "They shall become one flock." (*V. 16.*) There can be only one true flock, as there is one Shepherd. Christ has "other sheep" that are not yet of this fold (*v. 16*), and they must be brought in; here is, doubtless, a reference to the necessity of the Church's missionary work among the Gentiles—those who in all the world will "hear" the voice of Christ and will respond to his call when they hear the preaching of the gospel. But they, Gentiles as well as Jews, must be gathered into the "one flock." There is not to be one church for the Jews and another one for the Gentiles. There must be no divisions of race, nation, or class within the Church of God. It was to re-create the lost unity of the human race that Christ came to earth and died—that unity which was lost through Adam's sin, which has resulted in all the warring divisions and separations among the sons of men. Christ's proper work is to restore peace, unity, fellowship, and love amid the discordant clamor of the world, and the Church is the sphere in which this work is to be begun. If it does not manifest unity and fellowship within its own life, it is not the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Vine and the Branches

The same teaching is put forward under the quite different metaphor of the vine and the branches in *ch. 15*. Here John brings out the New Testament conception of the *necessity* of the Church, as well as its unity. Some versions of Christianity have stressed the individualistic aspect of religion, almost to the exclusion of the corporate, and have made it chiefly a matter

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. What does John teach about the Church?
2. What are the meanings of the "shepherd and sheep" metaphor?
3. Consider the implications of the "vine and branches" figure for the Church.

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of the relation of the individual soul to God. This is not the point of view of the New Testament, which everywhere teaches that the individual enters into relationship with God in virtue of his union with Christ. Paul, for example, teaches that the individual disciple is a "member," or limb, of the body of Christ, and he has need of all the other members (see *I Cor. 12: 12-30*); there is, in the New Testament view, no such thing as fellowship with God apart from membership in Christ's Body, the Church. And this is clearly the teaching of *John 15: 1-8*.

In this passage Christ is represented as a vine, and the individual disciple is a branch of that vine. As the branch draws life from the tree, so the individual Christian draws life from Christ. No grapes will grow on a branch that has been severed from the parent vine; the fruits of Christian living will not be manifested by those who have cut themselves off from the fellowship of Christ's body. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a [severed] branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (*V. 6.*) God is the vinedresser who tends the vine and prunes it, lopping off the branches that bear no fruit. A fruitful vine brings great credit to the vinedresser who has planted and tended it; so Christians who produce the fruits of the Christian life "glorify" the Father and bear evidence that they are Christ's disciples (*v. 8*).

The Fruit from the Branches

The gifts and graces of Christian character are thus the products of our life in Christ—in the fellowship of his disciples. They are not things of which we may boast, as if they were our own unaided achievements. If we produce in any measure "the fruit of good works," that is no occasion for self-righteousness in us; the credit should go to the vine into which we have been grafted, and to the vinedresser who has labored to make it fruitful. But—as Jesus insisted in *Luke 6: 44*, and it is interesting to note how John here takes up a recorded saying of the Lord in one of the earlier Gospels and develops it—"each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs." Men will therefore judge Christ by the works done by his disciples, for these works are the fruits of the Christ vine.

The Church is always being evaluated by the kind of lives that its members live and by the characters that they evince to the world. John stresses again and again the necessity of showing forth to the world the

l fruit of Christian living, above all, unity and love. new commandment I give unto you, that ye love e another; even as I have loved you, that ye also e one another. By this shall *all men know* that ye my disciples, if ye have love one to another." *hn 13: 34, 35.*) As we have seen above, this unity l love are to be the means by which the world will ow that Christ is indeed come forth from the Father that Christ is indeed the saving revelation of God. en will be convinced of the truth about God in Christ t by arguments but by love. The kind of sacrificial e that Christ has bestowed upon his Church is to the quality and mark of the Church, the only thing at will prove it to be not a human but a divine institution.

Thus, we see that John's teaching about the Church, e whole body of Christ's disciples, is the same as that of Paul and all the other New Testament writers. The Church must be one, because Christ is one, not divided. It must, above all things, maintain the mutual love among all its members that is characteristic of the relationship of Christ himself with the Father and with his disciples. This is possible only in so far as the Church is indeed Christ's body and all its members are branches of the one Vine, drawing all their life from Christ, and manifesting among themselves and to the world the fruits of self-sacrifice, fellowship, and love. These "graces" of the Christian life are not human possibilities, but they become possible through the gift of divine life that flows from the vine to its branches.

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing." (*Ch. 15: 5.*)

8

THE BREAD OF LIFE

Read *John 6: 1-59.*

WE HAVE noticed already John's habit of taking an incident, a saying, or a theme from the tradition corded in the three earlier Gospels and developing ound it a profoundly spiritual meditation upon its most meaning. In his sixth chapter he takes the story the feeding of the five thousand, which is recorded each of the other three Gospels, and bases upon it s lofty teaching about Christ as the Bread of Life. rst, he tells the story of the miracle of the feeding in straightforward and unelaborated way; then he sses to its significance as a "sign" of who Jesus ally was; and, finally, he goes on to bring out the charistic teaching that was implicit in the miracle, esenting to us the doctrine of the Church of his day ncerning the mystery of Christ's body and blood in e celebration of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion.

We may begin by noting—though we cannot here velop the point—that in Mark's version of the feeding of the five thousand (*Mark 6: 34-44*) there is implicit the suggestion that Jesus' action was an enacted rable, a giving of the bread of life, a foretaste of the avenly banquet of the Messiah in the Kingdom of od, which the Church celebrates every time the faithful meet to "do this" in remembrance of Christ and in ticipation of the Messianic feast of the redeemed fore the throne of God.

What is implicit in Mark is now made quite explicit John. Jesus took the bread, gave thanks (or "made charist"—the word "eucharist" means "thanksgiving," and this is the origin of its later use in the Church r the Holy Communion), and gave it to the assembled company in the desert place. So later he will do at e Last Supper with his disciples on the night of his betrayal. So still he does (though invisibly, and through his minister) at all the Eucharists of his Church as it meets to "proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (*I Cor. 11: 26*), as it goes on its pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world. So finally he will do "at the end of the ages," when, for all the faithful, he is the host at the banquet that he has prepared for those who love him in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The clue to interpretation of Jesus' miracle of feeding as a "sign" of who he really is may be found in *John 6: 14.* We have noted that John never uses the word "miracle" for Jesus' mighty acts; they are always "signs," for they have a deep, underlying significance. Now the feeding of the five thousand is a sign, as the people said, that "this is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world." The reference is to the prophecy contained in *Deut. 18: 15,* where Moses says, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet . . . like unto me." Jesus is the promised Redeemer whom Moses himself had foretold. He has given the "sign" that Moses himself had given; as Moses fed the hungry Israelites in the desert with "bread from heaven"—the reference is to the story of the manna in *Ex., ch. 16*— so Jesus in the desert has fed his "New Israel" with the heavenly bread.

That John clearly has this Old Testament narrative in mind is proved by his explicit statement later in the chapter (*John 6: 30-33*). The Jews ask Jesus for a sign that they might believe: "Moses," they say, "gave a sign to his people, the sign of the manna in the wilderness." To which Jesus replies that it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven, but God himself, and that God is now giving the true bread, of which Moses' manna was only a foreshadowing. Christ himself is the true bread that God gives to the world.

Those who eat this bread will have eternal life, whereas all those who ate Moses' manna in due course died (*v. 58*). Christ is the bread of eternal life. Thus, John is telling us, those who have eyes to see will recognize in Christ the bread of life and will perceive in his miracle of the feeding a "sign" that he is the prophet like unto Moses, prophesied in the Scriptures and known in his Church at "the breaking of the bread."

The Bread from Heaven Gives Eternal Life

From this revelation of who Jesus really is, John goes on to a consideration of the significance of the Lord's Supper in the Christian Church. If we are to understand what is said to us in this great chapter, we must try to understand the place and the importance of the eucharistic rite in the Church of John's own day, at about the end of the first century.

The Lord's Supper was celebrated in obedience to the Lord's command (*I Cor. 11: 24, 25*) every "Lord's Day," that is, Sunday. The first day of the week was observed as the day for the chief Christian act of worship because it was the day on which the Lord had risen from the dead. Thus, every Sunday was an Easter Day. One of the strongest arguments for the truth of the apostles' experience of the resurrection is the fact that they met every Lord's Day to celebrate his death—to re-enact that dreadful scene in the upper room on the night on which their Master had been taken from them. Had it not been for the certain and joyous experience of the risen power of Christ, such a celebration would have been too unbearably sad for repetition. The proof of the resurrection lies in the fact that the Church of Jesus Christ has met constantly from the very beginning to "proclaim his death." In their obedience to Jesus' command to "do this," the disciples found their assurance of his real and living presence. It is against the background of the Church's experience of the living Christ in the "breaking of the bread" that the teaching in this chapter must be understood.

Jesus himself is "the bread of life," the bread that cometh down from heaven, the bread of God. (*John 6: 32-35.*) Jesus is God's gift to the world, by which the souls of men receive the food that sustains in them eternal life. All those who believe in Christ partake of this food. "He that believeth hath eternal life." (*V. 47.*)

The Greek words for "eternal life" originally meant "the life of the aeon," that is, "the life of the age." In John the words are applied to the Kingdom of Heaven. And this Kingdom is not something to be realized only when the present world has passed away. It is something that has already broken into this present age, by way of foretaste, with the coming of Jesus and his Church. The disciples of Christ already, as it were by anticipation, possess this "life of the world to come," or "eternal life," as our English versions somewhat inadequately translate it. Christians who possess this kind of "life" will not die (though their bodies will die); they have already (at their baptism and conversion) died; for them death is past. The Jews of old ate the manna in the wilderness and they died; those who, by faith, by believing in Christ, eat the bread of life will never die. (*Vs. 38-51.*) Thus, John does not mean by "eternal life" any idea of a timeless eternity, an existence "beyond" or "outside" time. His "eternal life" is in time, but it is in a new time, the time of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is this life which even now we possess by faith, that is, by believing that Christ is the revelation of God and of his purpose for us.

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. What is the "sign" set forth in the miracle of the feeding? Consider carefully the relation between Jesus Christ and Moses, as explained in this lesson.
2. What does John mean by the words "eternal life"?
3. Why is the worship of Christ in the Lord's Supper necessary to salvation?

The Flesh and Blood That We Share

In the next section (*vs. 52-59*), it becomes clear that the passage has definite reference to the Lord's Supper, for we find that the idea of "blood" is introduced along with that of "flesh" (body). If John had still been thinking solely in terms of the historical miracle of the feeding, we might have expected to find a symbolical explanation of the fish that figures in the story along with the loaves. But there is no such interpretation. Instead, we are introduced to the wholly new symbolism of Christ's blood. John records a meditation upon Christ's words at the Last Supper, "This is my body"; "This is my blood."

The passage now states categorically that the worship of Christ in the Eucharist is necessary to salvation. The sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is not an optional extra for Christians. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves." (*V. 53.*) Christ's body and blood are the true meat and the true drink of our souls. (*V. 55.*) Without them our soul's life will not be sustained. "He that eateth me, he also shall live because of me." (*V. 57.*)

In view of what we know of the prevailing attitude of the Apostolic Church toward the Eucharist, we cannot interpret these words in any other way. The Christian Church, at the time John was writing, regarded participation in the Eucharist as the means by which the followers of Christ were joined to him and enjoyed communion with him. This idea of communion—"holy communion"—is well brought out in *v. 56:* "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him."

The Church of New Testament times had no theory of how the eucharistic bread and wine became for us Christ's body and blood, and we must be careful not

read any later theories (such as that of transubstantion or anything else) into the words of John's Gos-. The Early Church members accepted in good faith assurance of Christ that their souls were fed by his , by his very body and blood, when they met to ey his command to "do this" in remembrance of him. ey did not argue, dispute, theologize, or deny; they eyed, and they found that his promise was fulfilled, d their Lord was made known to them in the break- of the bread.

In many ways John is indifferent to historical data such. He is not concerned to reconstruct history or give us (as Luke tried to do) a narrative concerning e things that from the beginning had been reported eyewitnesses and that had been traced accurately m the first. His purpose is quite different—it is not much to recount and record history as to interpret and understand its meaning. Yet for all this he is emphatic about the central fact of history. This risen Lord, whom the Church knows as the bread of life in the Eucharist, is none other than the historical Jesus—"the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know" (*v. 42*). The Son of God really and truly came "in the flesh" (*see I John 4: 2, 3*); God really lived a human life, in a body, in actual human flesh.

John's emphasis on "flesh" is the very nerve center of his whole Gospel. The great truth about the gospel of Christ is that it is no fiction, no play acting; it is a true story; it really happened in history. In this sense, John is not at all indifferent to history—and that is why he lays so much stress upon the flesh and blood of Christ. It is because Christ was actually flesh and blood in history that we possess our assurance of eternal life; and of this truth of history the eucharistic bread and wine, stretching across all the centuries from him to us, are the efficient symbol and sign.

9

THE OLD AND THE NEW

Read *John 2: 1-22.*

N THIS chapter two incidents are recorded in the ministry of Jesus: the miraculous changing of ater into wine, and the cleansing of the Temple. The rmer incident takes place in Galilee, the latter in rusalem, where so much of the ministry described in e Fourth Gospel is located. Both stories emphasize central truth with which John is deeply concerned, amely, that the old order is at an end and the new der is here. Of course, the other Gospels—and all the st of the New Testament—are insistent upon this uth.

The general standpoint is that the new age of the spel has replaced the old age of expectation; the ingdom of God has drawn nigh; those things which any prophets and righteous men had looked for in the ays of waiting are now being fulfilled before the eyes nd ears of Christ's disciples.

John has his own ways of emphasizing the distinction between the old age and the new, but he is only aborating the common New Testament point of view. here is, he maintains, a vast difference in quality beween the old order and the new, as great as the differnce between water and wine. There is something utrly new about Christ and his coming, something that as not and could not have been there before his revelation of it. "The law was given through Moses; grace nd truth came through Jesus Christ." (*John 1: 17.*) hus, throughout this Gospel, we constantly find the ggestion of *newness:* Christ brings new life, eternal fe, a new commandment, the commandment of love, ew eyes and new seeing (*ch. 9*), a new birth (*ch. 3:*), the new age.

Israel, the Fig Tree

John's Gospel makes quite clear the radical newness of the Word of God in Christ. He does not minimize the importance of Israel in God's plan. Its age was an age of promise; it did not, however, contain within itself the possibility of its fulfillment and renewal. The fulfillment and the renewal must come from outside, from "above." The Law and the Prophets of Israel were wholesome and good in themselves, but they pointed to a consummation beyond themselves. They were only imperfectly understood by the people; the Scriptures were not read aright (*ch. 5: 39, 46, 47*). There were many good Jews who were shining examples of the religion of Judaism at its best; among them were men like Nathanael—"an Israelite . . . in whom there was no guile" (*ch. 1: 47*)—and Nicodemus (*chs. 3: 1-21; 7: 50-52; 19: 39*). But there was much in Judaism that had become corrupt and that was far from the lofty standard of the Law and the Prophets. The self-righteousness of the Pharisees and the sordid and avaricious worldliness of the Sadducees had turned to dust and ashes the first fine flower of promise that was present in Israel's early faith in God.

For these reasons, in John's Gospel the expression "the Jews" (for example, see *ch. 2: 18, 20*) is usually used in a bad sense to denote those who had perverted the truth of their ancestral religion. Judaism must now be brought to an end; the age of the Law and the Prophets was over; the Messiah, the fulfiller of both the Law and the Prophets, was here, and they must give place to him. As a religion, Judaism was finished; it had accomplished its role in the divine scheme of salvation, and the next stage had commenced.

DESCENT FROM CALVARY, a carving in terra cotta by Henry Kreis

Here again John is only developing the teaching of Mark, who in his allegory, or enacted parable, of the barren fig tree has already made the same point: Judaism was like a barren fig tree, which produced a fine show of leaves but no fruits of righteousness (*Mark 11: 13, 14*). In the Old Testament, Judaism is often represented as a fig tree (see *Hos. 9: 10*), and doubtless in *John 1: 48* the fig tree symbolically means Judaism—"when Nathanael was still a good Jew." The verdict of the Messiah, God's judgment upon Judaism, is pronounced: "No man [shall] eat fruit from thee henceforward for ever" (*Mark 11: 14*).

When we thus understand the historical position of Christ's ministry in the divine plan of salvation, and when we know something about the actual situation of first century Judaism and Jesus' encounter with it, we are able properly to understand the two stories contained in *John, ch. 2*. Both deal with the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, between the Messiah and the religion of Israel. Both are, as it were, enacted parables, with deep significance. They teach that Judaism is now superseded. It is fulfilled and transcended by the coming of the Messiah.

The first story—that of the miraculous changing of water into wine—is set at a marriage festival at Cana in Galilee. It teaches us that the first beginning of the miraculous changing of the old order of Judaism into the new age of the gospel took place during Jesus' ministry in Galilee. (*V. 11.*) The second story teaches us that the completion of this work did not take place in Galilee, but in Jerusalem; it was in the Temple at Jerusalem that Jesus overthrew the whole corrupt system of Jewish worship, and, by dying and rising again, raised up a new temple, the temple of his body, the Church, in which the new order finally and completely puts an end to the old. Thus the chapter as a whole gives us, in story form, a meditation upon the significance of the ministry and death of Christ, who is both the end and the fulfillment of Old Testament religion.

John's Attitude Toward History

We must notice carefully, once more, John's attitude toward history. On the one hand, he is not concerned to give us precise chronological details and actual eyewitness accounts of incidents that actually happened. Thus, he treats the historical data of the Gospel tradition with the greatest freedom. He rearranges his material quite freely in order to emphasize his teaching. On the other hand, he is intensely concerned to bring out the real meaning of history—of the fact that Jesus Christ is "come in the flesh," that he really lived, taught, did his mighty acts, suffered, died, and rose again.

An illustration of this attitude is given us, as we have seen, in the miracle of the raising of Lazarus. John does not dwell on how this work was accomplished. Instead, he interprets the event to us as a parable of Jesus' own resurrection. This is the real historical significance of the miracle: it was performed by One who himself rose from the dead.

The same attitude toward history is demonstrated in the way John gives us the miracle of changing water into wine. Looked upon purely as a historical event, the miracle is hard to understand. Unlike other miracles that accomplish some good as well as teach an important lesson, this one seems to serve no worthwhile purpose. But as a parable of the way Jesus transforms the water of Judaism with the rich wine of the gospel, the act acquires rich meaning for faith.

The same consideration may be applied to the historical difficulty occasioned by John's placing of the incident of the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry instead of in the last week of his earthly life, as the other Gospel writers do. The writer is not concerned with chronological accuracy,

nd he rearranges the Gospel tradition in order to suit s teaching purpose. Here he is giving us a meditation pon the significance of the ministry of Jesus as a hole, the ministry that began in Galilee and ended in rusalem. Its significance is that it brings Judaism to n end and inaugurates the age of the Kingdom of od. We have thus no need to question John's arrangeent of the incidents of Jesus' life, and, once we have nderstood his purpose, we no longer need to feel that is somewhat free treatment of the Gospel material nstitutes any very insuperable difficulty in our readg of his book.

he Two Parables

The Gospel uses the "sign" of the changing of the ater into wine to teach that the "grace and truth" rought by Jesus Christ is a new thing. It compares to ne old Mosaic religion of law as wine compares to ater. This is the miracle which Jesus has worked: he as changed the water of purification (*v. 6*) into the ood wine of life in the new age (*"eternal life"*). Judam was only a preparation, a purification, for that hich was to come. This was the work which Jesus beran in Galilee. Nevertheless, it was not completed here ("mine hour is not yet come," *v. 4*). It could be ompleted only by his death and resurrection, which istorically took place in Jerusalem. It was not in Galiee or at the Feast of Purification that "his hour" came —the hour of completion and fulfillment; it was in erusalem, at the Feast of Passover. (See *ch. 13: 1.*) But his ministry in Galilee, his work of preaching and ealing, was indeed the "sign" that God's Kingdom ad arrived, and all those whose eyes had been opened o perceive the significance of his words and deeds beieved on him there: "His disciples believed on him."

Similarly, the meaning of the story of the cleansing f the Temple is that Jesus has done away with Judasm, the old and corrupted worship of the Temple and ts sacrifices, and has raised up a new "temple," consisting of all those who worship the Father "in spirit nd truth" (*ch. 4: 23*). This new temple is, of course, the Christian Church in all the world. Jesus, John explains, did not mean that he would rebuild the actual Temple in Jerusalem in three days: "He spake f the temple of his body" (*ch. 2: 21*). Here John doubtless hints at a double reference in the word "body." At his resurrection, the body of Jesus had been raised up from the tomb; but also, in the thought of the New Testament and in the writings of Paul, which John undoubtedly knew, the "body" of Christ was the whole Christian fellowship. Judaism, symbolized by the Temple that was to be destroyed, must be replaced by the Church of Jesus Christ.

Thus, out of the historical fact of Christ's driving of the money-changers from the Temple, an event familiar to us from the other Gospels, John gives us a profound meditation on the whole mission and work of Jesus. Jesus was not indifferent to Judaism or the worship of its Temple; on the contrary, he was consumed with zeal for it (*v. 17*)—just as in Luke's Gospel he weeps over Jerusalem, even as he pronounces its doom. But he had to cleanse God's Temple, which he regards as his "Father's house," thus fulfilling one of the last prophecies recorded in the Old Testament: "The Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; . . . he is like a refiner's fire, . . . and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto the Lord offerings in righteousness" (*Mal. 3: 1-3*). John, like Mark, sees in Jesus' action in the Temple the symbolic fulfillment of this prophecy. The Lord has suddenly come to his Temple, to his Father's house; and the result of his coming and of his cleansing is that the servants of God may now in every place offer unto God "offerings in righteousness."

There is here a warning for the whole Christian Church and for every Christian congregation: the Lord must constantly come to his temple and cleanse it, that by virtue of *his* righteousness, and not our own, we may offer to God the sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies, of all our life and work, that it may be pure, holy, and acceptable to him.

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. Why was it necessary for God to supplant Judaism with Christianity?
2. How does John treat historical facts?
3. What is the parable meaning of the two incidents of changing water into wine and cleansing the Temple?

To Each His Own Encounter with His Lord

"Children are born into Christian homes, they are baptized, they are brought up in the nurture of the Lord. . . . So far, so good, but! I have two sons. I trust that they are growing up in a Christian home. But, I know that someday they must make their individual response to Jesus. How that day of encounter will come I do not know. I only pray that their mother and I may so teach them about Jesus and guide them in their relationship to him, that when Jesus comes to them with the demand for conscious discipleship, they may each recognize him and say gladly, "Yes." This encounter may take place with or without a great emotional upheaval; it may not even be one event, but a ripening relationship across the years; but whatever its form, its inward quality before Jesus is the same—it is the experience of standing alone, stripped of every disguise, of being shattered by his presence and stabilized by his forgiving love. It is the experience of the I before the Thou. The more moral my children are the more difficult they will find the consciousness of sin, but Jesus must deal with that. It is he who converts." [1]

—*Daniel T. Niles.*

[1] From *That They May Have Life*, by D. T. Niles. Harper & Brothers. Used by permission.

THE NEW BIRTH AND THE NEW COMMANDMENT

Read *John 3: 1-14; 15: 9-17.*

In our last lesson we saw that the Body of Christ, the Church, must replace the Temple, symbol of Israel under the law. But the Body must ever fulfill its single function in the world: to witness to Christ, its Head. Our remaining four lessons, therefore, deal with this work of witnessing, as, impelled by the new commandment, we go forth into the world under the power of the Spirit with the good news that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world.

The newness of the gospel must again be emphasized. Christianity is no mere development of things that were already implicit in Judaism; nor is it an amalgamation of the old Jewish religion with certain notions derived from Greek and pagan sources (such as the idea of the *logos*). It is indeed the completion of Judaism, in the sense that Judaism awaited the coming of something beyond itself and pointed to it; perhaps John would have said—though it is not clear that he had given much thought to this point—that Christianity likewise summed up and transcended all that was true and good in Greek and pagan philosophy and religion. But the one point that he clearly wishes to stress is that Christianity has brought something new into the world. To be able to perceive this requires in us a new birth, a complete conversion, which, in its turn, brings to us an entirely new possibility in the sphere of life and morals—the way of love. John, as we shall see, has his own method of emphasizing that Christian love emerges as a new quality in the history of mankind.

John's teaching concerning the necessity of the new birth is contained in the discussion with Nicodemus in *ch. 3.* Nicodemus, we may remind ourselves, is a representative of the old order of Judaism at its best. Though a Pharisee, he seems to have been a member of the Sanhedrin, the high council of the Jews, which the Romans tolerated as a kind of useful puppet government. He came to Jesus "by night"—a phrase that John insists upon, probably as a symbol of the darkness of ignorance and sin (see also *ch. 13: 30*). He comes secretly to Jesus, under cover of darkness, because he has been convinced that the "signs" wrought by Jesus prove him to be "a teacher come from God" (*ch. 3: 2*). Jesus says to him that a man—even a man who is an upright and God-fearing "teacher of Israel"—must experience a "new birth," or, better, "a birth from above." Nicodemus, taking the words too literally, and not seeing their deeper meaning—how often our literalism prevents us from seeing the deeper meanings in the words of the Bible!—asks woodenly how a man can go through the biological process of birth for a second time. In *v. 5* Jesus explains that he means that a man must be born again, but this time "of water and the Spirit." This is the only means of entrance into the Kingdom of God.

John's Teaching on Baptism

What is meant by the birth "of water and the Spirit"? We have seen how, in *ch.6,* John has given us his profound meditation upon the meaning of the Eucharist in the Christian Church. In precisely the same way he is here giving us his interpretation of the significance of Christian baptism. In New Testament times entry into the Church and the right of full membership within it were obtained by means of the ceremony of baptism with the laying on of hands. There were no church buildings, complete with fonts or baptistries, in those days; and the ceremony of the initiation of new members usually took place by the bank of a river, into which the candidates (or catechumens) descended and were immersed. Their descent into the water represented their dying with Christ and their burial with him, for the ceremony was one of total immersion; their emergence from the waters represented their being raised with Christ, as sharers in his resurrection. They were now "new" persons, and they were given a new name (a "Christian" name); an "old man" had died, and a new person, a "new creation," was born. The apostles (and later the apostolic men who represented or succeeded them) then laid their hands upon the catechumens, in confirmation, or ratification, of the baptism and as a sign of their commissioning as members of the "royal priesthood," or order of laymen in the Church, each of whom had his own special function or ministry. The going down into the waters of baptism represented not merely the washing away of the filth and stain of heathendom but also the death of their old, sinful self, the "old Adam" in them; and the laying on of hands represented the giving to them of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which should empower them to fulfill their appointed office as members of Christ's body. Baptism in the missionary Church of the first century was, of course, in most cases adult baptism.

It is against this background of the Church's faith and practice that the words of this chapter are to be read. "Born of water and the Spirit" is, of course, synonymous with Christian baptism in the sense just described. Christian baptism differed from the baptism of John the Baptist in being a "baptism of water and the Spirit," whereas John's was a baptism in water

y. This truth has already been explicitly stated in words of the Baptist in *ch. 1: 33*. The real minister the sacrament of Baptism is Christ himself, for it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, just as the real st at the Eucharist is also Christ himself, who is the penser of the bread from heaven. "A man can re- ve nothing, except it have been given him from aven." (*Ch. 3: 27.*) Human ministers of the sacra- nts are necessary and must do their appointed part, ist perform their "office" or "liturgy"; but the im- rtant aspect is not what men do, not what the human nister does, but what Christ does; it is he who gives Spirit and dispenses the bread of life. Baptism, like Eucharist, is essentially a divine, not a human, rk. It is no mere man-made formality, like joining lub or social group. It is God's remaking of a man o the image and likeness of Christ.

Thus, John teaches us the necessity of rebirth. In r first birth into a human family and nation, we are lesh"; something more than the merely human fleshly") nature is required if we are to enter the ngdom of God, the realm of the Spirit. The Church the Spirit-filled community, and at our second birth Baptism) we enter into the sphere of the Holy Spirit's eration. Men cannot control that sphere, mark its ontiers, or set limits to it, for "the wind bloweth here it will"; nor can we determine in which direc- n or at what speed the Church will grow. The work conversion, of opening blind eyes, is the work of hrist through the Spirit. In the Early Church no dis- nction was conceived between baptism and conver- on; the former was a symbol of the latter and was the ay the Church bore witness that the conversion was enuine. Before he could be baptized, every candidate ad to profess his sincere and personal belief, and at is baptism he publicly acknowledged it in some mple creed or formula, such as "Jesus is Lord." This as taken as evidence that the Holy Spirit was already t work in his heart, for as Paul says, "No man can y, Jesus is Lord, but in the [power of] Holy Spirit" *I Cor. 12: 3*).

New Life, New Love

One thing had to be done before the Holy Spirit ould create the Church of the new birth. We read in *ohn 3: 14, 15* what that one thing was: the Son of Ian would have to be crucified ("lifted up") on the ross. Then, by this supreme act of God's love, the pirit would come and breathe love into the souls of hose who were called, and the Church would be born.

In our next passage, *ch. 15: 9-17*, the self-sacrifice f Jesus on the cross is set forth as the supreme exam- le of the love that must be the mark of the life of the pirit-filled community: "Greater love hath no man han this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" *v. 13*). Elsewhere, John has taught that Christ's disci- les must seek to emulate his humility and love; at he Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus has under- aken the service, usually performed by the youngest

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. How is the teaching that Jesus gave to Nicodemus about the new birth related to the sacrament of Baptism?
2. What had to happen before the Church could be formed?
3. What distinguishes Christian love from all other kinds of sentiment or affection?

member, of washing the feet of the company (*ch. 13: 1-11*). "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher," says Jesus, "have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." (*Vs. 14, 15.*) Jesus gives his "new commandment" of love, but it is not one that he merely speaks with his lips; it is a command that is laid upon his followers, not only by means of his words, but also by means of his own example and action. The disciples had seen the love that they were commanded to exhibit in their fellowship abundantly demonstrated in Jesus' own life and deeds. The love of Jesus, supremely shown forth on the cross, is what makes possible the fulfillment of the commandment of love by his disciples. They are endowed with his Spirit in order that they may show forth a quality of life that, on the purely human level, is unattainable.

The New Testament as a whole sets forth the quality of love that came into the world with Christ and that, through his Spirit, permeated the Church of his disciples. It is indeed a new thing, an entirely unprecedented phenomenon in the history of the world. "See how these Christians love one another!" was first spoken in admiration and wonder, and not in sarcasm. The New Testament had to coin a new word to express this new thing, and the word *agape* (love) became one of the great key words of the Church (cf. *I Cor., ch. 13*). John brings out this aspect of novelty in the life of the Church by means of his expression, "a new commandment."

Love (*agape*), in its New Testament sense, is a quality of the will rather than of the emotions. Loving people does not merely mean "liking" them. Our likes and dislikes cannot be commanded, since our emotions are not at our command; we cannot like someone just by telling ourselves that we ought to do so. But love is an attitude of will; we can love others—which, in practice, means treating them as we would wish ourselves to be treated—even if we cannot "like" them in the sense of forming an emotional attachment toward them. Love embraces justice, for justice in one of its aspects is only love at a distance, or love applied to vast groups (e.g., "the Chinese"), or individuals with whom we cannot enter into fully personal relations (e.g., the dining-car attendant). But love goes altogether beyond justice, since no requirement of justice would ever compel one to give his life for another, especially for an enemy (cf. *Rom. 5: 6-11*). Love for

its full realization implies the establishment of fully personal relations, and this truth is brought out by John in his use of the word "friends."

Friends of God

Jesus enters into the fullest possible personal relations with us. He is not content with the master-servant relationship. He does not treat us merely as his servants—though we are his servants: "No longer do I call you servants [the Greek word means "slaves"] . . . but I have called you friends" (*John 15: 15*). Unlike slaves, who are given orders that they have to obey, whether or not they understand or approve of them, Christians are called to share in the mind and counsels of God, revealed in Christ. They may co-operate freely with God's purposes and thus find in his service their perfect freedom. Where love is, freedom and obedience are not incompatible. When God's will has become ours, so that we love to do the things that please him, then we are truly free. We are his friends and servants at the same time: "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (*v. 14*).

But the initiative is always God's, and not ours. It is he who has chosen us, as Christ first chose his disciples (*v. 16*). We are his friends and his servants not because of any merits or virtues of our own, but because he of his grace has chosen us. We must not flatter ourselves that we are indispensable to God or that we have any claim upon him in consequence of our invaluable services to his Church; such a conceit is Pharisaism. We "bear fruit" (*v. 16*) only if and because we "abide" in him: the fruit is the product of the vine, not of the branches themselves. The branches are dead and withered if they do not bear the fruit of love. "Love one another" is the test of any Christian community or congregation, whether it abides in Christ. If we keep his commandment of love, we abide in him, as he, keeping the commandments of his Father, abides in God (*v. 10*).

11

OVERCOMING THE WORLD

Read *John 15: 18; 16: 4, 32, 33.*

JOHN does not present the progress of the Christian enterprise in the world as any light or easy thing. The way of discipleship is a hard one; it is the way of the cross. Of course, this is the standpoint of the other Gospels and of the whole New Testament: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (*Mark 8: 34*). But John has his own distinctive method of bringing out this somber teaching. Running right through the long discourse of Jesus to his disciples after the Last Supper (*John, chs. 13 to 16*) is to be found the sense of challenge, of the opposition of the world, of the power of hostile forces. Nevertheless, the discourse ends with the affirmation that Christ is triumphant over all the opposing powers: "I have overcome the world" (*ch. 16: 33*).

Like the other New Testament writers, and like Jesus himself, John does not take a facile or an optimistic view of human nature. We cannot find in the Bible any of the superficial liberal humanism that has been so prevalent in recent modern thinking and writing. We read, for instance, at the end of *ch. 2*, that although certain men believed in Jesus, he nevertheless would not trust himself to them, because "he knew all men, and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man" (*vs. 24, 25*). We might find a commentary on the last clause of this quotation in the words of Jesus himself, recorded in *Mark 7: 21-23*: "From within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, . . . foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within." There is no illusion about the "natural goodness" of the human heart in the New Testament. Sin is known to be real and terrible, and mankind needs liberation from its awful power.

According to the New Testament, men are not by nature "sons of God," as they were for much of pagan religion (cf. *Acts 17: 28*) and as they are for modern, optimistic non-Christian humanism. The Christian gospel is this: though men are by nature sinners, and thus the object of the wrath of God, they may, through his unmerited grace, "receive the adoption of sons" through faith in Christ (cf. *Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 5, 6*). In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is far from sharing the modern sentimental view of mankind as "sons of God." Note how he calls the Jews of his day (who, after all, were highly "moral" and strove hard to keep the law) not sons of God but of the devil (*John 8: 44*).

The Alien World

John's realistic view of human nature is conveyed by the distinctive meaning that he gives to his frequent expression, "the world." "The world" (*kosmos*) means for John not so much the physical world, the universe (though perhaps it includes this), as the world of men,

ir whole civilization and culture, as organized apart m God and his purpose. But "the world" in this se includes also supernatural powers, for it is dom-ted by unseen spiritual forces of evil. It is a mistake think of the "spiritual" as being wholly and inevi-ly good; there are evil spiritual forces as well as od ones.

Is such an idea completely irrational? What do we an when we speak of the spirit of self-seeking, or e spirit of materialism, or the spirit of Nazism, or e spirit of nationalism? Are we merely using meta-ors when we talk in this way? The New Testament es not think so. We are surrounded by hostile spirit-l powers, and we have to wrestle against them. (*Eph. 12.*) So John thinks of this world of ours—God's od world—as having been invaded and conquered hostile evil forces that now, like an occupying army, slave its inhabitants. "The whole world lieth in the power of the] evil one." (*I John 5: 19.*)

Christ, however, has begun the assault on the powers evil and is even now liberating mankind from its ndage to the occupying forces. His death and resur-ction constitute the decisive victory over the alien mies of wickedness, and Satan's kingdom is being st down (cf. *Luke 11: 18-22*). The captain of the emy hosts is defeated: "The prince of this world th been judged" (*John 16: 11*). The disciples of hrist are like those who have joined the "resistance" d are awaiting eagerly the day of their final libera-on from the occupation forces. The weapon by which ey overcome is faith in Christ. They could no longer sist if they did not believe that Christ's victory had en won. But they are of good cheer, because they be-eve that Christ has overcome the world (*v. 33*). This is the victory that hath overcome the world, ven our faith." (*I John 5: 4.*)

Some of us may perhaps wish to regard this New estament picture of the world as merely metaphor, ot to be taken too literally. We may, if we honestly ink this way, regard it as metaphor, provided we do ot thereby minimize the terrible reality of evil, the orrible nature of sin, and the seriousness of our ruggle against it. But let us not be too hasty in our erdict. We stand in the presence of mystery, and we ust not dogmatize too easily. We are all too apt to rn things into "problems" that can be solved intel-ctually, whereas they are really mysteries before hich our intellects are helpless. The important matter that we should take seriously the Biblical warning bout the need of all of us, even the best of men, for edemption and liberation from the powers of sin and vil, however we rationalize these things. Whatever ex-lanations we may approve, sin and evil remain stark nd terrible realities in the spiritual realm.

The World Our Enemy

There is thus an uncompromising opposition be-ween the Christian and "the world" (in the special ense in which John uses the word). "Love not the world," he writes in the First Epistle of John. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (*I John 2: 15-17.*) "The world passeth away"—this present world of age is already in dissolution. To be worldly, to be intent only on our fortunes and prospects in this age, is as foolish as the contentment of polar bears at home on an iceberg that is drifting southward. "The powers of the age to come" (*Heb. 6: 5*) have already been manifested in the words and works of Jesus Christ. Christians must not be "fashioned according to this world" (*Rom. 12: 2*); they must not accept the standards and values of the secular society around them, but must judge all things in the light of the revelation of God in Christ; they must seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.

If Christians are true to their profession, they may expect to be derided, suspected, and rejected by the world. "Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you." (*I John 3: 13.*) The New Testament writers constantly sound this warning in the ears of a persecuted Church. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you . . . as though a strange thing happened unto you; but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice. . . . If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name. For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God." (*I Peter 4: 12, 13, 16, 17.*) Christianity is not, never has been, and never will be, a success religion: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, . . . for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad" (*Matt. 5: 11, 12*). As a church leader of today remarked during the Nazi persecution in our own times, "The only surprising thing about persecution is that Christians should be surprised at it." Jesus himself warned his disciples of the fate that they must expect, as we read in all the Gospels. John's version of his warning is found in *John 16: 2:* "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God."

This prophecy had been proved literally true long before the time when John wrote his Gospel, and it was already apparent that "the blood of the martyrs

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. Is suffering still an integral part of the Christian vocation?
2. Why is "the world" opposed to Christ?
3. But how did God show his love for "the world"?

was the seed of the Church." An early Christian writer, shortly after John's time, wrote these words of the Christians of his day: "They love all men, and are persecuted by all men. . . . They are put to death, and they are made alive. . . . They are reviled, and they bless. . . . When they do good, they are punished as evildoers; when they are punished, they rejoice. . . . Can you not see them thrown to wild beasts, to make them deny their Lord, and yet not overcome? Do you not see that the more of them are punished, the more numerous the others become? These do not seem to be the works of man, they are the power of God, they are signs of his coming." (From "The Address to Diognetus.")

The bitterness of the struggle that Christians have to wage arises from the fact that whole groups of men, as well as individuals here and there, have gone over to the enemy and are in the pay, as it were, of the occupying evil powers. They are (to keep up our modern analogy) "quislings," who are the dire foes of the Christian "resistance." In John's Gospel we encounter them both as groups and as individuals. The most important of these groups is "the Jews." By this expression, used frequently throughout his Gospel, John means the Jewish nation as a whole, which had rejected its Messiah. The Christians had indeed been "put out of the synagogues." The bitterness of the conflict between the Church and the synagogue is reflected in the harshness of the language used in this Gospel by Jesus in his disputes with "the Jews." However, at the same time that John in his historical situation feels keenly the apostasy of his fellow countrymen, he does not lose sight of the important role that had been assigned to Israel in the providence of God, and he can still write, in his Gospel, "Salvation is from the Jews" (*ch. 4: 22*).

Among individuals, Judas Iscariot is the supreme example of the "quisling"—the disciple, one of the original Twelve, who betrayed his Master (*ch. 18: 2, 3*). He had sold himself to "the prince of this world." "Then entered Satan into him." (*Ch. 13: 27.*) The terrible depravity of this archquisling is underlined with bitter regret in *vs. 21-30*. But there are others who also may be regarded as in the pay of "the prince of this world," notably the high priest Caiaphas and his accomplices. (*Ch. 11: 47-53.*) Then there is also Pilate, who exercises the powers of this world, little knowing that even the powers of Caesar were held only on sufferance from God. (*Ch. 19: 10, 11.*) The forces of light and darkness are engaged in mortal combat, but the issue is already decided and determined from the foundation of the world.

Yet "God So Loved the World . . ."

In the last resort John's attitude to "the world" is deeply paradoxical. The world lieth in control of the evil one, but it itself is not wholly evil. The world is not beyond redemption, because it is still the object of God's fatherly love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. . . ." (*Ch. 3: 16.*) Jesus Christ is "the light of the world" (*ch. 9: 5*); therefore there is hope for the world. And John does not say that Christ is only the Saviour of the Church, or of those called out of the world; he is "the Saviour of the world" (*ch. 4: 42*). Christ came into the world in order to liberate it from Satan's bondage: "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (*I John 3: 8*).

12

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

Read *John 14: 14-28; 16: 5-15.*

THE long discourse of Jesus to his disciples, contained in *chs. 13 to 16,* is spoken by him, according to John's account, on the occasion of the Last Supper on the night Jesus was betrayed and handed over to his enemies. He speaks, as we should have expected, of his impending departure out of this world. The disciples do not understand his meaning; how could they understand it until after the events of the next three days? They are, not unnaturally, filled with perplexity and sorrow. "Because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." (*John 16: 6.*) They would have kept their Master with them if they could have done so. But the Messiah must fulfill his appointed course, and his "hour" is almost come.

It is the hour of Passion, of resurrection, and of ascension. John, as we have noted, does not give any account of the ascension of Christ. Instead, he, as it were, telescopes the three events into one great "hour" and deals with all three in one section of his Gospel.

Why He Had to Go Away

"It is expedient for you that I go away," says Jesus to the disciples (*v. 7*). While he remains with them in the "flesh," his presence is localized and his influence is limited. The fact of incarnation necessarily implies localization and limitation. But the work that remains to be done cannot be done under the limitations of a human life; it can be done only by a universal Christ, whose Spirit fills the world, a Christ who can be with his disciples "always, even unto the end of the world"

Matt. 28: 20). The Spirit cannot come until Christ is orified. (*John 7: 39.*)

Christ's going away from his disciples achieved two ds. First, Christ goes to prepare a place for his disples. The metaphor is used of someone who goes on ead of his companions to prepare accommodations r them. Christ, who has come forth from the Father, w returns to the Father and to the "Father's house." this house, that is, in heaven, there are many mansons—or, as the Revised Standard Version translates e passage: "In my Father's house are many rooms; it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prere a place for you? And when I go and prepare a ace for you, I will come again and take you to myself, at where I am you may be also" (*ch. 14: 2, 3*). The orious gospel of the ascension is this: Christ did not vest himself of our humanity, which he had assumed the incarnation. Rather, he carried our humanity ith him to the Father's throne, where, with the Father, e reigns in glory. There, we who are "in Christ"—inorporated into him in his Body, the Church—already ign with him in glory; already we are in heaven, in ne place that he has prepared for us. But this we know s yet only by faith: as long as we are in the body, e can know Christ only by faith. But at the end of orld history, we shall know him as we are known, and e shall see him "face to face."

Our assurance of this truth rests upon our experince of the Holy Spirit of Christ, here and now, in this resent age. The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, comes o us as "an earnest," a first installment, a foretaste, f the full reality of the Kingdom of God, which is to e ours hereafter. This coming, this presence, of the oly Spirit of God with us is the second thing that hrist accomplished by his going away from us at his glorification." "It is expedient for you that I go away; or if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto ou; but if I go, I will send him unto you." (*Ch. 16: 7.*)

Understanding the Holy Spirit

Who, then, is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God at work in our hearts and in the Church. The implest way to regard the Holy Spirit is to think of God himself in his infinite goodness and grace, accommodating himself to the narrow limits of our human earts. We think of God as Father and Creator, the reat Maker and Monarch of all things. We think also f God as living in Christ the life of a human being pon the earth, in the "flesh"—the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth, which he took from the substance of Mary, is mother. We think of God as the Holy Spirit, alays at work in the hearts of those who will receive im—convincing us of God's righteousness by assuring s of Christ's ascension to the Father's throne, and convincing us, too, of the reality of the judgment that God has passed upon the world in casting down the rule f evil forces. (*Vs. 8-11.*)

These are the three ways in which God has revealed imself to us—as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These (in the traditional language of orthodox theology) are the three "Persons" of the Holy Trinity. That is to say, these are the three ways in which the living God has revealed himself to us as personal. We must try not to think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three separate and distinct "persons" in the sense of three separate human personalities. The three Persons of the Trinity are much more closely related to one another than that. They are one God. In the operation of each of them, the other "Persons" are present. When Christ acts, God is acting in him; when the Holy Spirit enters into our hearts, Christ himself enters them. This complete oneness of the Persons is best understood by taking seriously John's words, "I am in the Father, and the Father [is] in me" (*ch. 14: 10, 11*).

Thus, we must not seek to distinguish too sharply between the Holy Spirit and the risen Christ. The New Testament writers, including John, do not do so. They refer indiscriminately to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God and as the Spirit of Christ. In John's Gospel Jesus says to the disciples that the Holy Spirit will come to them, but he also says, "I come unto you" (*v. 28*). In the coming of the Spirit Christ himself comes to us. In the operation of the Holy Spirit, the risen Christ is acting. We are with him already (by faith) in the place whither he is gone, and he is with us here through the presence of his Spirit. So near are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to one another that, where one is present, the others are also present.

It is most important that we should pay attention to the names by which the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the Fourth Gospel. He is the "Comforter." (*Chs. 14: 26; 15: 26; 16: 7.*) "Comforter" is not a felicitous word in modern English, because it has lost its former sense of "strengthener." The Greek word is *Paraclete,* which means advocate, the counsel for the defense in a lawsuit. The Revised Standard Version uses "*Counselor.*" The word suggests that a function of the Holy Spirit is to stand by our side, as it were, in the days of trial, in times of persecution, or when we are called upon to witness to our faith. Its exact sense is caught in the words of *Mark 13: 11:* "When they lead you to judgment, and deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit." This was the convincing experience of the leadership of the Spirit of God which was so strongly felt by the preachers of the Early Church; and it is still the experience of those who boldly witness for their faith today amid the doubts and cynicism of the modern world. We do not know the power and reality of the Holy Spirit until we put our faith to the test of evangelism.

Guide Into Truth

Then, too, the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (*John 14: 17; 16: 13*). He is the One who, after the departure of Jesus, will guide people into all truth. (*Ch. 16: 13.*) When Jesus was still in "the flesh," John

tells us, the disciples could not fully have understood the significance of his life and words, for their meaning did not and could not become apparent until after the great events of the crucifixion and the resurrection. It was the Holy Spirit who guided the Apostolic Church to interpret aright the meaning of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It was through the interpreting work of the Spirit that Christ continued his instruction of the disciples after his "departure." "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth." (*Vs. 12, 13.*) Sometimes we hear expositions of this text which suggest that the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of this promise, is guiding scientists and discoverers in the progress of their research, and that the "all truth" thus referred to means all our wonderful scientific knowledge. Such an interpretation of the words is far from John's intention. He makes it clear that the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads the Church (not "scientists," etc.) is the truth of Christ. "He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." (*V. 14.*) The primary function of the Holy Spirit is that of witnessing to Christ; he does not speak of himself (*v. 13*), but of Christ (*ch. 15: 26*). It is because they are empowered by the Spirit that Christian missionaries are able to bear convincing testimony to the truth of Christ. (*V. 27.*)

It was the Holy Spirit who recalled to the apostles after the resurrection the words that Jesus in the flesh had spoken to them, and that they could hardly have understood at the time, but that were now brought home to them with vivid power: "He shall . . . bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (*ch. 14: 26*). For example, how could the disciples at the Last Supper have understood the meaning of the words of the Lord, "This is my body," and "This is my blood"? Yet what a wealth of meaning the Church, taught by the Spirit, afterward found in them! The Christian Church down the ages has always recognized that bringing the words of Jesus to life in our hearts, or the words of the Bible in general, is always the work of the life-giving Spirit. The Spirit bears his inward testimony in our hearts when we read the Bible and its meaning comes home to us, as God's Word addressed personally to us. When we know that God is speaking to us in the words of a preacher or in our hearing or reading of the Scriptures, then we may be certain that the Holy Spirit is doing his quickening work in our hearts. The Spirit is the "convincer." The work of conversion, of opening the blind eyes and unstopping the deaf ears, is always a divine and not a human work. Luke, in his story of the walk to Emmaus (*Luke 24: 13-35*), shows how it is the risen Christ (or the Spirit of the risen Christ) who walks by our side on our pilgrimage through the Scriptures: "They said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures?" (*v. 32*). The risen Christ through his living Spirit makes himself known to his Church throughout the ages at the reading of the Scriptures and at the breaking of the bread.

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. What does Jesus mean by his "hour"?
2. Why did Christ have to go away before the Holy Spirit could come to the Church?
3. What is the work of the Holy Spirit?
4. What does it mean to pray "in Christ's name"?

"In Christ's Name"

Lastly, we should notice that the Father sends the Holy Spirit in Christ's name. (*John 14: 26.*) The "name," in Biblical usage, denotes the real essence and character of a person. The Spirit bears the character of the historical Jesus. It is in this sense that the disciples are bidden to pray in the name of Jesus: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do" (*ch. 14: 13;* cf. also *ch. 15: 16*). It is promised that only those things which are asked in the name of Jesus will be granted, not all the things which we might selfishly ask for without stopping to consider what praying "in his name" really means. It means that in our prayers we should ask for nothing that we cannot honestly ask for in the character and spirit of Jesus. Christian prayer is not magic; it is a bringing of ourselves and of our requests into line with the character and will of God revealed in Jesus. The Spirit who, in our prayers, makes intercession within us and who helps us in our prayers (*Rom. 8: 26*) is the Spirit of Christ, and this means that our requests must be such as the good Teacher of Nazareth would make if he were in our place. This is a severe test for all our intercessions. But the Spirit who is sent to us in the name of Christ will strengthen us to live and to pray as God would have us do.

NEXT QUARTER: ROMANS

Christian Faith and Life lessons for adults during April, May, and June will be a study of Paul's letter to the Romans. People who have studied this book have worked revolutions in the world of thought. When Augustine heard the voice saying to him, "Open the book and read," it was Romans to which the Spirit directed him for his conversion. Outstanding Bible scholars of our own day have testified that it was a reading of Romans that led them back, beyond scholastic pursuits, to the pure gospel of God's grace.

The lessons are written by a college professor of Bible whose daily job it is to make the Word come alive to his students. He is Prof. Fred J. Denbeaux, of Wellesley College, Massachusetts.

THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST

Read *John 4: 1-42.*

THE Gospel story, John teaches us, is firmly grounded in history; it is rooted in a particular ace and period—in Palestine in the days of Pontius ilate. Jesus in "the flesh," in his actual incarnate life history, was localized, and the scope of his activities as confined—with certain brief exceptions—to his ealings with his own countrymen, the Jews. It was ght and inevitable that this should be so, for the Jewh people were the chosen instrument by which God ad elected to achieve his purpose for the whole world: salvation is from the Jews" (*John 4: 22*). Neverthess, it is clear that John, though himself a Jew and lling a story of something that had happened among e Jews, has, throughout his writing, a deep underlyg understanding of the world significance of what appened in Palestine. The events he describes happened indeed in a small section of the world, but they ossessed a universal significance. Jesus is the Messiah f the Jews (*vs. 25, 26*), but he is also the Saviour of ie world (*v. 42*).

esus and Samaritans

One of the rare encounters of Jesus with a non-Jew as that with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's Well. he Samaritans were people of mixed blood who some enturies earlier had been settled in the strip of county that separated the Jews of Judea in the south from ie Jews of Galilee in the north. In order to pass from udea to Galilee, both of them properly Jewish territories, it was necessary to pass through Samaria. There as an ancient and bitter feud between the Jews and ie Samaritans, who had no dealings with each other. he Jews had prohibited the Samaritans from joining i the worship of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the Saaritans had built their own temple upon Mt. Gerizim i their own country (the mountain to which the oman in this story refers).

Unless we understand something of the bitterness hat existed between Jew and Samaritan in the first entury, we shall miss the significance of various eferences in Scripture to these people. Jesus' parable i *Luke 10: 25-37* was about a "good *Samaritan.*" The candal in the eyes of the Jews who heard the story was hat it was a story about a *good* Samaritan. We should lso note the significance of the words "and he was a amaritan" in *ch. 17: 16* at the end of the story of the en lepers. The normal Jewish attitude toward the amaritans is well represented by the prejudice and nger of James and John in *ch. 9: 54.*

The Samaritans had some Jewish blood in their veins, but it was much diluted with that of other peoples. The bitterness of their relations with the Jews was perhaps partly based on the fact that their quarrel was a family one. The Jews professed to despise them even more than the "dogs of Gentiles." Hence, we may discern the true significance of Jesus' speaking with a Samaritan woman in today's Scripture passage. It was unheard of for a rabbi to speak with a woman at all, for the rabbis did not favor the education of women and even disputed among themselves as to whether or not women had souls. But this woman was a Samaritan, and it was an even more offensive thing that Jesus should have spoken to a Samaritan than to a Gentile. It is characteristic of John's method that he hangs upon the story of this encounter his interpretation of the role of Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

Christ for the World

In his discourse to the Samaritan woman, Jesus reveals himself to her as the Messiah and as the fulfillment of the hope of Israel. Characteristically, the discussion about the "living water" arises out of the simple request for water to drink. Jesus possesses the power to exchange the ordinary water of human existence for the water of eternal life. Again there occurs the contrast between Christianity as fulfillment and Judaism as promise. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well?" (*John 4: 12.*) Jacob, or Israel, the patriarch and founder of the Jews, provides water; Jesus provides the water of eternal life, which forever satisfies the need of thirsty souls. The "water" of Israel cannot satisfy man's spiritual need ("Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again"); it is in Christ alone that there is found that "living water" which can satisfy all our soul's desire. Convinced that Jesus is "a prophet" because he seems to know all about her (*vs. 16-19*), the woman, wondering whether this can indeed be the Messiah, goes and tells her friends and neighbors (*v. 29*), with the result that many of the Samaritans come to believe in him (*vs. 39-42*).

Using this story as his starting point, John develops his teaching concerning the world-wide significance of the Person and mission of Christ. Salvation is not for the Jews only, as they thought; the worship of the one true God is now to become universal. The localization of the knowledge of God in Judaism and its Temple is now to be concluded. "Neither in this mountain [alone], nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. . . . The true worshippers shall worship the Father in

spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers." (*Vs. 21, 23.*) John, writing at the end of the century, probably in or near Ephesus, where Diana has been dethroned by Christ in the hearts of many, knows that this prophecy has already been fulfilled, and that men are worshiping God in spirit and in truth wherever the gospel of Christ has been proclaimed.

"God is a Spirit" (*v. 24*), not a localized semimaterial presence. Through Christ he may be worshiped in every part of the world. Henceforward, God, whose nature is spiritual, must be worshiped spiritually ("in spirit"). The elaborate material worship of the Temple courts is superseded. He must also be worshiped in sincerity ("in truth")—not merely by the keeping of an external ritual law and by the offering of costly sacrifices.

That John is thinking of the universal and missionary implications of the gospel is clearly indicated in *vs. 35-38*, where he refers to the "harvest." The work of preparation has been done by the men of faith of the old dispensation; the prophets of Israel have, as it were, made ready the ground and planted the seed. The coming of the Messiah is the signal for the beginning of the harvest. Now the apostles of Christ must go out into all lands and gather it in, for the grain is ripe for the sickle: the days of waiting are over. The prophets and teachers of Israel have labored to prepare the harvest of the Messiah: now the apostles may enter into their labors. The good grain stands ready in every land for the harvest of the apostolic missionary enterprise. It is by undertaking this commission that the apostles will receive their wages "unto life eternal."

The meaning of the word "apostle" is "one sent forth," or "commissioned." The apostles are thus *sent* into the world by Christ as he himself has been *sent* into the world by God. A literal translation of the Greek of *ch. 17: 18* would read like this: "As thou didst *apostle* me into the world, even so *apostled* I them into the world." Hence it is that the Church of Jesus Christ must always be an "Apostolic" Church—a Church *sent* to gather in the harvest of the world, and every true Christian man and woman must know that he or she is personally thus *sent*, or commissioned, by Christ for the ingathering of Christ's own.

Greeks to See Jesus

In many clear ways John thus teaches us the universal significance of Christ. His mission, like his love, overleaps the widest of human divisions—male and female, nation and nation (cf. *Gal. 3: 28*). His purpose embraces even the despised Samaritans. Throughout his Gospel John keeps reminding us of the universal scope of Christ's salvation. Jesus died for the Jewish nation, but "not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad" (*John 11: 52*). Even at the triumphal entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem, John reminds us of his universal mission; the Pharisees say,

What to Look For in This Lesson

1. What is the significance of the references to Samaritans in this and the other Gospels?
2. How does John convey the idea that Christ is *the world's* Saviour?
3. What is the parable meaning of the miraculous catch of fishes?

as it were prophetically, "The world is gone after him" (*ch. 12: 19*). Then, in the next verses (*vs. 20-22*), John tells how certain Greeks (i. e., Gentiles who were Greek-speaking, but not necessarily inhabitants of Greece) ask to see Jesus. These men, who had come up to Jerusalem to worship in the Court of the Gentiles at the Feast of Passover, must have been "God fearers," that is, devout Gentiles attracted by Jewish monotheism and morality who had not, however, taken the step of being circumcised and thus become Jews.

John does not record that these "Greeks" were granted an interview with Jesus, and yet he implies that, in a very real and profound sense, their request was granted. These "Greeks" are symbolic of the whole non-Jewish world, the world that is waiting for the revelation of the one true God. The longing of devout men for truth and righteousness all over the world is, in fact, to be satisfied in that very "hour." This is the significance of Jesus' comment when Philip and Andrew tell him of the request of the Greeks: "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (*v. 23*). The time of waiting is over. The world is ready for the revelation that is now about to be made. The moment when the Son of Man enters upon his glory is the moment of the revelation of God to the whole world. Before that moment, there was no universal gospel; God had worked through Israel alone. This is the hour of the glorification of God's name, not in Israel only, but in all the world. "For this cause came I unto this hour." (*V. 27.*) Jesus must now be "lifted up [on the cross] from the earth," that is, out of the earth: he must be glorified, become the universal Christ. So will he "draw all men unto himself" (*v. 32*). This is John's way of teaching that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation . . . to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (*Rom. 1: 16*).

A Missionary Parable

In the last chapter to his book (*ch. 21*), John again returns to the theme of the missionary implications of the gospel. As he clearly shows us in this chapter, the risen Lord is for him the universal Christ. John's version of the story of the miraculous draught of fishes is, significantly, a story of the risen Christ. The disciples, toiling alone, have taken no fish (*v. 3*). (Cf. *ch. 15: 5:* "Apart from me ye can do nothing.") But Christ is ever near, even though his disciples knew it not.

(Continued on page 90)

THE INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS
FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHING

Uniform Series

Theme for This Quarter: JESUS AND THE PEOPLE

Early Followers of Jesus

Lesson 1 — CALLED FOR WITNESSING

(Finding the Christ)

ET's begin our quarter's study with a quiz. Listed below in one column are the names of some of the people we shall be studying about from is week through April 13 (Easter). Opposite these names are certain facts e associate with these people. Can you put the fact with the proper person?

1. Nathanael	( )	a. Successful seller of purple dyes
2. Simon Peter	( )	b. Blinded before he believed
3. Matthew	( )	c. The tree climber
4. Nicodemus	( )	d. Impatient with her sister
5. Zacchaeus	( )	e. Known as the doubter
6. Martha	( )	f. Defended Paul before the Jews
7. James	( )	g. Wrote a Gospel and a history
8. Barnabas	( )	h. Prejudiced toward Nazareth
9. Paul	( )	i. The grandson of Lois
10. Timothy	( )	j. Denied his Lord
11. Lydia	( )	k. Asked for privilege in the Kingdom
12. Luke	( )	l. Came to Jesus by night
13. Thomas	( )	m. A tax collector

Easy, wasn't it? The most obvious facts were given about each person just o prove our point. We know at least one thing about each of these people. heir names and an identifying fact are household words in most homes here the family has studied the Bible.

But we would know none of these people were it not for this: each of iem became a follower of Jesus Christ! Like the millions of unnamed indi-iduals who rest safely in oblivion today, these thirteen people would prob-ɔly be ignored by history. They mean something to us only as they reflect ieir knowledge of him. They are significant to us, not in their own right, ut only for what they can tell us about the Lord.

It is interesting to reconstruct the lives of some of these people. Psy-iologists can explore how Paul was blinded before he believed. Tired house-ives can defend Martha's being "cumbered about much serving."[1] athanael can be condemned for his civic pride and prejudice. Interesting, es—but none of these things are important! We do not really need to know *ow* the phenomenon of blindness came upon Paul; what we need to know is *hy* God had to use this method of conversion with this particular man, id what lesson for our faith is hidden in it. Martha lost her patience, but iat is not important to us. What we want to know about her is what Jesus eant to her, how he was able to use her life for his purposes.

Therefore, during the next fifteen weeks we shall not be primarily con-erned with these people as people. We shall be interested mainly in *what ey mean for faith;* or, in other words, what they can help us to understand id believe about the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are subordinated to the ne who called them. They are meaningful for us only as they reflect his ght in their lives.

The First Disciples

This adventure for understanding begins with the call of the first disciples. John's Gospel tells at the very beginning how certain men recognized Jesus as their Lord and committed their destinies to him.

Andrew and a companion who is not named were the first to become disciples. It is interesting to contrast their experience with one that some other would-be followers had; see *Matt. 8: 19-22.* Read these few verses in Matthew; then read from today's lesson *John 1: 35-40.* Note the differences. The scribe and the other man say enthusiastically and of their own accord, "Lord, we will follow thee!" Andrew and his friend wait for Jesus to speak first, and then in reply to his question put out a tentative feeler, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" To the overzealous scribe Jesus says that he, Jesus, has no place to live; he is a homeless wanderer. But to Andrew he says, "Come and see." The scribe does not become a disciple, as far as we know; Andrew claims that in Christ he has "found the Messias."

Why is there such a difference in the approach of Jesus on these two occasions? Why are the two men named by John accepted and the two described by Matthew rejected? Why does Jesus tell one man that he has no home and then invite Andrew to share his home?

Lessons 1 to 4 and 10 are by GEORGE L. HUNT.

[1] All quotations in this study section are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

The Scripture Lesson for January 6

Scripture: *John 1: 19-51*

The Printed Text: *John 1: 35-49*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "We have found the Messiah (which means Christ)."—*John 1: 41.*

John 1: 35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; *36* and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" *37* The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. *38* Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" And they said to him, "Rabbi (which means Teacher), where are you staying?" *39* He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. *40* One of the two who heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. *41* He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). *42* He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cé phas" (which means Rock).

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." *44* Now Philip was from Beth-sa'i-da, the city of Andrew and Peter. *45* Philip found Na-than'a-el, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." *46* Na-than'a-el said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." *47* Jesus saw Na-than'a-el coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" *48* Na-than'a-el said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." *49* Na-than'a-el answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

The difference lies in the receptivity of the individuals concerned—a factor that Jesus with his spiritual vision could quickly discern. He saw that the man who said, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," was not ready to be a disciple; but the men who said only, "Where dwellest thou?" were ready.

Andrew and his companion were followers of John the Baptist first. As his followers they had heard his call to repentance. They had been convicted of their sins, and they had confessed them. They had gone down into the waters of the Jordan and been baptized, thus signifying their desire for cleansing and rebirth. They had listened to their leader's emphatic statements that he was not the Messiah but only the forerunner of the Redeemer. They had probably seen him baptize Jesus. They had heard John proclaim, with the voice of a herald, "Behold the Lamb of God!" They had received every encouragement then to leave John and walk after Jesus. This was to make them ready for their true calling.

But they did not go to Jesus unthinkingly or even easily. They followed behind him, and they did not address him until he had spoken first. If he *was* the Lamb of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world's sins, who were they to presume that he would want them among his followers? Nathanael would be reticent to follow because of skepticism, but Andrew and his friend were holding back because of humility. From John the Baptizer they had learned their lesson well. If he was unworthy to loosen the sandals of this Leader, who were they to force themselves upon the Lamb-Redeemer?

Even when Jesus did speak, asking them what they were seeking, these men did not burst forth with a torrent of extravagant commitment, as if they were just waiting for the word that would unleash their ardor. Instead, they asked for a time and place to talk with him further. They wanted leisure; they wanted privacy; they wanted to ask their questions. They were intelligent men. They wanted to know from his own lips who he was and what he professed to do.

Abide with Him

Jesus recognized their hesitancy and invited them to the house where he was staying. There they "abode with him." This word "abide" has trenchant significance in John's Gospel. In *ch. 14: 23* Jesus says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The prerequisite for abiding with God is love. Andrew and the other men had that love for God which made abiding possible. Then, in *ch. 15: 4-7*, Jesus gives the parable of the Vine and the Branches, and "abide" is the key word here. Branches do not survive unless they are securely grafted to the vine, the source of their vitality and strength. Followers do not survive the rigors of the Christian life unless they are securely grafted—or, in a word, unless they "abide"—to Christ. But the result of this secure abiding is "much fruit" and true discipleship. Furthermore, he who abides, that is, he who loves God and who draws his power from Christ and his words—may "ask what he will, and it shall be done unto him" (*ch. 15: 7*). The necessary condition for answered prayer is constant abiding.

The Fruit

After "abiding" with the Lord, Andrew began to bear fruit immediately. He sought his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. The first fruit of abiding is witnessing. In the last analysis, the people we shall study about this quarter interest us only because they witness to Jesus Christ, and the question is, "*How* did they witness?"

John the Baptist witnessed well; so faithfully did he point to Christ that he himself lost followers to him. Andrew had much the same experience. His witnessing brought his brother Simon to the Lord, and gradually Simon became the leader of the band, while Andrew took a subordinate place. Like his first teacher, Andrew "decreased" that the better qualified leader "might increase." This was the result of faithful witnessing, and to appraise the

orth of Andrew's fruit-bearing we ed only to imagine what would ave happened if Simon Peter had ever been won to Christ; or if, hav- g won him, Andrew had "pulled nk" and had stood in the way of imon's exercising his talents.

Then Jesus called Philip. What nd of witnessing did *he* do? Ap- arently he went right to work, for e persuaded Nathanael of Cana o come and meet Jesus. Notice the ifference between Andrew's "pros- ect," his brother Simon, and Philip's otential convert. Andrew had no onvincing to do, but Philip had to ell his friend on the point that Jesus as worth meeting. It was Philip ho had some other unusual people o win later on in his career: Simon he sorcerer (*Acts 8: 9-13*) and some ther Samaritans, and the Ethiopian unuch (*vs. 26-40*). Can we conclude hat Philip was especially well quali- ed to work on the hard cases? Whatever we say about that, the ontent of his witnessing is exactly he same as that of any other true isciple: "Do not take my word bout the Lord, but *come and see* or yourself." He makes no claim to ave won the converts by means of is own great skill as a reasoner or y his own interpretive powers as a eacher: "Come and see Christ; *he* vill win you to himself." Christ loes the soul-winning; the disciple is nly the herald, the messenger, the guide, to bring the potential believer to the point where the Lord can do his work with him.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does John the Baptist exemplify his teaching, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (*John 3: 30*)?
2. Trace the stream of witnessing given in today's lesson.
3. What is the significance of the word "abide" in this Gospel?
4. What does it mean for us to witness to Christ as Lamb, Vine, and Door?

The Gate of Heaven

Nathanael of Cana, skeptical but without guile, calls forth from Jesus the first words that the Messiah says about himself in this Gospel. They are tremendous words. Up to now every one of his recorded words has been directed toward soul-winning: "What seek ye?" "Come and see." "Thou art Simon . . . ; thou shalt be called Cephas." "Follow me." But from Jesus' conversations with Nathanael we learn some significant things about himself. To his true followers he will show great things. Miracles are about to take place. God's glory is now to be shed upon the earth. Men are to know God in all his personal power. How? Why? Because "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (*John 1: 18.*)

To show clearly who he is and what he is about to reveal to men, Jesus describes his work in terms of the patriarch Jacob's ladder dream. At Beth-el the son of Isaac had seen angels going from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth. The two spheres of earth and heaven were linked in that supreme moment of illumination. "Now," says Jesus, "the same thing is happening again. I have come to be the eternal link between heaven and earth, the mediator between God and man. I am the unfailing revelation of the Father to men and the intercessor for men to God. I am the gate of heaven that Jacob saw in his dream."

It is but a step in vocabulary from this reminder of the ancient vision to the other words Jesus said about himself: "I am the door: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." The Gate of Heaven, the Door of entrance into the Kingdom, has come. Enter, if you would be saved!

What the disciple must sooner or later say of his Lord is here set forth. This *we* must witness if *we* would be his disciples.

Lesson 2 — CHRIST'S FISHERMAN

(The Call of the Fishermen)

EXCEPT FOR Christ himself, Simon Peter is the best-known person in the Gospels. He is a favorite of many people because, they say, "He is so much like any of us." Think of him, and you think of a man of many faults and weak moments; the adjective applied to him most frequently is "impetuous"; the events we think of first are his protest that he would not deny his Lord, his denial a few hours later, his words that led Jesus to call him Satan, and his sharp disagreement with the apostle Paul in which Peter came off the loser. "Poor Peter!" we say. "He meant well, but—." We love him, but we pity him.

His fellow Christians loved him too. They knew his faults, and they sympathized with him. However, they also realized what a strong power he was in the life of the Early Church. He walked before them as a living testimony to the transforming power of Jesus Christ. They remembered the Peter that had been; they saw the Peter that now was; and they took courage. The stories they told about him were legion; no disciple had so many anecdotes clustering about his name as this man. And certainly one of their favorites must have been this one which Luke tells in *ch. 5: 1-11,* "The Lord Calls His Fisherman." Other people figure in this story, but it is Peter's tale.

In time, of course, it became more than Peter's story. It was symbolic of the call Christ issues to all disciples, instructive for everyone who would become his follower.

The Man Was Ready

When Peter's friends thought about his faults, in loyalty they must have coupled them with virtues. Certainly one of this man's greatest attributes was obedience, even when he did not believe very strongly in what he was told to do. In this week's lesson, he is pictured as tired from a night's work that had produced nothing. The nets were all washed; the boat was idling pleasantly near the shore. Rest at home had been his chief thought. Now the Preacher, who presumably knows little about fishing, suggests that at the most unlikely hour and in the most unproductive part of the lake they should seek a catch. Most of us, I imagine, would have tried to reason patiently with

The Scripture Lesson for January 13

Scripture: *Matt. 4: 18-25; Mark 1: 16-20; Luke 5: 1-11*

The Printed Text: *Luke 5: 1-11*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men."—*Mark 1: 17.*

Luke 5: 1 While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gen-nes'a-ret. *2* And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. *3* Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. *4* And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." *5* And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." *6* And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, *7* they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. *8* But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." *9* For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; *10* and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'e-dee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." *11* And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

this novice about his strange command. But Peter, though he protests the foolishness of the venture, obeys.

Now why did Jesus order the daylight expedition? He was not particularly concerned that Peter and company have fish to sell that day. Much of the catch would undoubtedly rot before nightfall. But he had a disciple to win, and miracle plus parable was the way to win him! Jesus knew his man; he knew Peter's destiny in the Kingdom; he knew a new kind of fishing was his vocation. Preaching the gospel would be like casting a dragnet into the sea, bringing into the Kingdom all manner of men, winning them by the miraculous power of the Lord of hosts. Here was a lesson to teach as well as a disciple to win.

It is significant that the official seal of the World Council of Churches in our day should show a tiny fishing boat whose masthead forms a cross. To this great organization, Jesus' command to Peter, "Launch out into the deep," has become symbolic of its mission. On the storm-tossed sea of the world, the Church sets out to obey its Lord. The vessel seems frail, but it is in reality invulnerable, for though Peter is in the boat, there is another Passenger, the Lord himself. He it is who will direct his Church to let down the nets and produce the catch. The Church has but to obey, as Peter did, and the journey will surpass imaginings in its success.

The Effect of the Miracle

The result of obedience was a miraculous haul. It broke the nets; it filled two boats so that they began to sink. How did Peter react to this unexpected embarrassment of riches? He saw it, not as an economic windfall, but as a revelation of his sinfulness. He knew that no fortuitous circumstance of wind and tide had produced these results. Rather, he stood in the presence of supernatural Power. Here was holiness; here was the Lord himself. And Peter fell in fear before him, confessing his sins. The great work of God made the mere man paralyzed with fear and contrition. "Who am I, that God should exert his overwhelming power in my behalf? I am a sinner who cannot exist before the eyes of this righteous one," he thought. "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

This was the effect Jesus expected the miracle to have. Again, he knew his man, and he wanted for a follower one who would be awed by divine power and contrite before it. He knew also that it would take a miracle to win a person like Peter, and he suited his method to his man.

What effect does this miracle of Jesus have upon us? We can dismiss it as an ancient tale that meant much to Peter but little to us. We can file it away as another proof of our Lord's supernatural power and let it go at that. Or we can be humbled by it, we can be judged by it, until, with Peter, we confess that, before the Lord God Almighty, who can stand?

We are justified in doubting the many occurrences that pass for miracles in our day. Protestants view with skepticism the crutches outside the church of Ste. Anne de Beaupré in Canada, or the cures wrought by touching Veronica's handkerchief, or the miraculous powers supposedly bestowed upon a Minnesota farmer's wife not long ago. These things are dangerous because they demonstrate how gullible we are and how unconverted we are that we should depend on these physical activities for our faith. But having dismissed these miracles, have we also lost confidence in the Lord's power to do great things with us and with his Church today? What could the Church do if it simply followed the Lord's command and let down the nets for a catch? The result of such implicit faith and obedience would seem like a miracle to us, but it would only be our Lord doing with us his accustomed work, doing what he can do if we are his willing fishermen. What stands in the way of greatness among Christians and in the Church today is not God's impotence but our selfishness, our unwillingness to place ourselves at his disposal to do with us what he will.

But when the miracle happens, what shall we say—"My hands and my work have got me this wealth," or "God, be merciful to me, a sinner"? God's goodness is not bestowed on us to make us proud. It comes to humble us and to remind us that we are men, not gods. We are of little faith. We would rather obey men and disobey God. This is our nature. God's miracle reveals it to us clearly.

But God Redeems

The Lord in Simon Peter's boat accepted his fisherman's confession of

ns and turned it to a fruitful end. Once the man knew himself accurately and frankly, God could use him. So he did not leave Peter groveling in penitence on the slippery bottom of the fishing vessel. It is not like God to let us wallow in self-incrimination; so quickly do our loud words about our miserable sins become not humility but pride. "See what a terrible man I have been! My sins exceed yours in grossness!" No, once the confession is sincerely made, God raises us up and assigns us the constructive task for which confession was a necessary preparation. He made Peter a fisher of men. This is true redemption: taking a man with no faith in himself and assigning him a work that in his own strength he can never do. Then he does it, in the power of the Lord. This is his way with all of us.

But Peter had to accept the task. We read that he did: he "forsook all, and followed him." The boat could become dry and split at the seams; the nets could rot on the beach. Peter had a new vocation that demanded not part-time efforts but his full employ. He would follow along dusty roads and up grassy hill slopes to listen to the Word. He would watch miracles of healing happen; he would make the great profession of *Matt. 16: 16*. He would stand with his Lord at the transfiguration; he would even let Jesus wash his feet in the upper room. He would wait in Gethsemane, and in well-meaning ignorance he would defend his Lord with the sword. He would have his aimless fishing trip suddenly interrupted by the appearance of his Lord. He would then preside at the selection of an apostle to replace Judas. He would preach the sermon inaugurating the Church. He would heal a lame man at the Temple gate. What a contrast between the Peter who said, "We have fished all night and caught nothing," and the Peter who commanded, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (*Acts 3: 6*)! He would carry the gospel to the Gentiles. And at the end, so tradition says, he would be killed by the Romans for his faith. All this would happen because he "forsook all, and followed" his Lord.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the events of the New Testament in which Peter plays a prominent part?
2. What are some of his good qualities?
3. Why is a confession of sins necessary before God can do any great work with us?

Lesson 3 — THE JOY OF THE BRIDEGROOM'S FRIENDS

(Matthew Becomes a Follower)

WEDDINGS are always happy affairs. For some reason there is an air of joy and friendliness and excitement surrounding a wedding unlike any other kind of exhilaration. Everyone is carried away by the spirit of the thing, so that even the dourest individual can usually be made to crack a smile on a wedding day.

Becoming a companion of Jesus is something like being the friend of a happy bridegroom. At least that's what our Lord himself told the disciples of John the Baptist when they came questioning the conviviality and exuberance of his disciples. John had been so weighed down by his sense of the world's sin, so burdened by penitence, that he could not see how anyone could be happy. And he was sincere, well-meaning in his feelings. Jesus understood and respected them. But when men had found their Saviour, how could they be sad? As soon ask friends of a bridegroom to be glum and sour on his wedding day as to ask Jesus' newly redeemed followers to hide their feelings of happiness at their emancipation.

Who Were the Friends?

Let us live with this story awhile and try to understand it. First of all, who were these friends whom Jesus honored by comparing them to the close and intimate companions of a bridegroom?

They were not the people you might expect to meet under such circumstances. They were the outcasts, the forgotten people, the ignored, the disinherited. Jesus, to be sure, did not limit his friendships to such folks; but, as a definite part of his ministry, as a planned intent and strategy, he came to them and created the joy that swelled in their hearts and put smiles on faces that had almost forgotten how to laugh for happiness.

In this group were the publicans, the men who collected taxes for Rome. Here is how the *Westminster Study Bible* describes them: "Originally [a publican was] one who bought the right to collect the Roman taxes and revenues. This privilege of collecting taxes was sold to the highest bidder. He in turn employed subordinates or actual tax collectors, who are also called 'publicans' in the New Testament. With few exceptions the publicans, great and small, were extortioners. In most cases the subordinate tax collectors in conquered territories belonged to the native population. . . . Publicans were generally scorned by the Jews as unfaithful to their own people." It is easy to see why the Jews, led by the Pharisees, would hate and despise these people. In his story condemning hypocrisy, Jesus has the Pharisee say, "I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (*Luke 18: 11*). In the minds of the people, publicans were classed with the most despicable characters; and it is worth noting that when Jesus in this story sought a contrast with the highly religious Pharisee, he chose the publican. Apparently this class of humankind was as low on the social scale as the Pharisees were high.

Also in the group were the sinners. This was almost a social class in Jesus' day. They were the folks who, for one reason or another, did not keep the Jewish laws and so were out of the synagogue. Some of them might have been excommunicated for an infraction of the rules. Others perhaps deliberately refused to have anything to do with religion and so had long ago been written off the list; they were incurable "sinners."

Then there were the indefinable groups—society's derelicts, the forgotten, the passed-by. The man in tatters who begged at the Temple gate, the woman who sold her body to the highest bidder, the one-eyed man with the piercing look of hatred in his single eye, the lame man who dragged his stump of a leg behind him as he lurched through the streets, the lonely panhandler and the silly drunkard—all these were attracted by the magnetism of their misery to join publicans and sinners at the feast where Jesus called them all his friends.

Their Leader

The leader of this motley crowd was Matthew. He had been a publican. How wicked a tax collector had he been? We do not know. It is enough to know that Jesus picked him out to be the missionary to the outcasts. He it was who could call these people together and be sure that they would come. He it was who could appreciate more than any other man among the disciples what Jesus did for publicans in the famous parable. Tears of gratitude probably flowed uncontrolled when Jesus said, "*This* man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

Then think of the part Matthew played in the company thereafter. The other disciples, some of whom probably shared the prejudice against tax collectors, found that these people were not so bad as they had been painted. Or even if Matthew had been a swindler and a clever extortioner, the disciples learned a more important lesson. They learned how Christ could change such a person and use him mightily.

And wherever the disciples went, following Jesus, outcasts in each community could take heart and have courage. Matthew became their symbol. Seeing him, they would whisper to one another: "Look, Matthew, the tax collector who used to be at Capernaum, is one of his followers! Do you think we could hear him too?"

Of course, he had the opposite effect on the pious people. They, seeing Matthew, would turn scornfully from any teacher who included the rabble in his company.

So, by their reaction to Matthew as well as by their reaction to Jesus, men judged themselves whether they would be for or against the Lord of glory.

Our Ministry to Outcasts

The Church has been most true to its mission when it has brought the Bridegroom to his outcast friends. The roster of history gleams with the names of men who have preached the gospel to those whom the world passes by. To a degree these conspicuous names reflect the weakness of the Church, for they stand out as prominent exceptions to what should be the accepted rule. Why should we, for example, glorify William Carey's pioneer work in India or Father Damien's among the lepers? They were only doing what any Christian should stand ready to do. The way we praise their valiance may reflect our sense of shame that we have not done so much. Every church's ministry is to outcasts—in its own community and throughout the world. But we go to these people not with paternalistic, charitable condescension. We go as men who themselves were outcasts from the Kingdom until Christ called us to it.

An example of this outcast ministry is found in the story of John Woolman, whose whole life was devoted to serving the Negro slaves who lived in America during the eighteenth century. Woolman was a Quaker who had a tailoring business in Mount Holly, New Jersey. (His *Journal* is a "Book for Christian Study" this quarter.) Early in his manhood he was led by God into a concern for Negro slaves. He reduced his business to the minimum that he and his family could live on and then spent much time each year traveling through the colonies to counsel with other Quakers about releasing their slaves. To feel closer to those he was liberating on some of his trips he went on foot rather than by horseback. He gave up everything in his personal life that was produced by slave labor. Once, at the close of the French and Indian war, he traveled among the Indians and demonstrated that here was a white man who respected them and wanted to know about them; this was the time when their reputation was at its lowest point among the settlers. His constant efforts for the Negroes

The Scripture Lesson for January 20

Scripture: *Matt. 9: 9-17; Luke 5: 27-39*

The Printed Text: *Luke 5: 27-39*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—*Luke 5: 31, 32.*

Luke 5: 27 After this he went out, and saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." *28* And he left everything, and rose and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his house; and there was a large company of tax collectors and others sitting at table with them. *30* And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" *31* And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; *32* I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

33 And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." *34* And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? *35* The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." *36* He told them a parable also: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it upon an old garment; if he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. *37* And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. *38* But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. *39* And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'The old is good.' "

finally resulted in the Society of Friends' refusing to let members hold slaves. It affected other religious groups also, so that, had his influence continued to prevail, slavery would have been abolished. Economic factors intervened, however, and slaves became such an asset that the evil practice took a new hold on life in the next century.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did Jesus attract some people and repel others?
2. What work was Matthew given for the sake of the Kingdom? Why was he especially fitted for this?
3. Define Christian joy. (In this connection you might read the letter to the Philippians.)
4. What is the meaning of the parables in *Luke 5: 36-39?*

What Was Their Joy?

We return now to the publicans, sinners, and outcasts who flocked to Jesus and found joy they had never known before. What was it that brought such light to their darkened souls?

First, it was just the simple fact that someone cared for them. Accustomed to being ignored and unwanted, they suddenly found a friend who loved them for themselves. They were treated as people, as human beings. They were not exploited or used as a means to an end. They were important because they were wanted. As Jesus spoke, he had something to offer them: hope in the Kingdom of God. He was giving them the gift of new life.

Then, it was the fact that this someone was God. *God cared for them.* They did not at this time fully understand who Jesus was, but they sensed that here was a person of power who cared for them. He spoke with unmistakable authority and command. If they did not at this time know that he was God, they at least felt that he had a unique relationship to the Father. All his promises had the ring of positive assurance about them.

Finally, he drove to the heart of all their difficulties and met their needs at the source. They needed, above all else, to know that God forgave their sins. No one else was assuring them of that. The Pharisees would say to them, "*If* you do this thing or that, God *may* forgive you." Christ came saying, "Repent, and you are forgiven!" The doors of redemption, long closed to them, closed and barred, with the scribes standing guard over them, were miraculously opened. The forbidden Holy of Holies, the presence of God, was wrested from the priests and made available to the people. Is it any wonder that the Bridegroom's friends were experiencing so much joy that it was impossible for them to fast and mourn?

The Shadow

Let them rejoice now, said Jesus. "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." (*Luke 5: 35.*)

What were these outcasts doing the day after their Lord was crucified? Some, of course, had long before left him. They had come at Matthew's invitation, and they had caught a gleam of the promise; but when, later, he talked of cross-bearing, they went away. (*John 6: 66.*) The seed fell on a variety of soils. But some of these outcasts must have followed all the way to the cross. How did they feel on that dark and dreadful day when the Lord Jesus had left the earth?

Though they had been warned that this day would come, still they were not ready. The old discouragement returned. The face sagged, the lines returned, the shoulders became stooped, the walk lost its spring. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." (*Luke 24: 21.*) But now . . . the Bridegroom was dead, and their joy was turned to mourning.

This, indeed, is the time for fasting, when we consider what it was that murdered him. It was sin that drove him there, *our* sin, outcasts that we are.

Yet we mourn but for a season. The resurrection comes, and the Lord returns to his own. Joy unspeakable is on our lips.

"The strife is o'er, the battle done;
The victory of life is won;
The song of triumph has begun.
Alleluia!"

"The three sad days have quickly sped;
He rises glorious from the dead:
All glory to our risen Head!
Alleluia!"

We may rejoice again. Our God has conquered death. Christ Jesus lives and reigns, and through him *we* are "more than conquerors." Nothing can separate us from his love. Let the Christian never be sad. God rules, and with *him* is the victory. This is always our joy as the Bridegroom's friends.

Photo by Ewing Galloway, N. Y. *Fritz von Uhde*

"GRACE BEFORE MEAT"

Lesson 4 — SEEKER FOR TRUTH

(Nicodemus, a Hesitant Follower)

THE question we want to ask about Nicodemus cannot be answered. We want to know if he ever became a full-fledged follower of Jesus Christ, and there is not enough evidence in the New Testament for us to come to any final conclusion on the matter.

Let us, however, look at the record to learn what we can from it. Nicodemus has an important lesson for faith, though it may be a sobering one for any who stand in his position today.

The Evidence

According to the records we have of early Christianity, Nicodemus is conspicuous by his absence. His name appears in no New Testament book written between the founding of the Church and the end of the first century. None of the other Gospels mention him; Paul does not tell about him; he does not figure in the history of the Early Church as given us in The Acts. The Gospel According to John offers all the evidence we have for his existence.

This does not mean, of course, that Nicodemus may not have been a disciple. There are many, many followers whose names are not preserved for posterity, and Nicodemus could easily have been one of them. Yet when you consider who he was, it would seem strange that, if he was a disciple, no one told us about it.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. Now these men were the archenemies of Jesus, as we have seen. Suppose one of them was converted from his stubborn blindness to be a follower of the light. Wouldn't you think that The Acts or one of the Gospels would tell us about it? The only Pharisee who followed Jesus completely, as far as we know, was Paul. Perhaps Paul's achievements so overshadowed those of Nicodemus that Nicodemus, though a believer, faded into insignificance. Yet it is hard to accept that viewpoint.

Nicodemus was also a man of wealth. He gave an extravagant amount of ointment for the burial of Jesus' body after the crucifixion; and tenderly, with great care, he helped to apply it to the broken skin of the crucified Christ. Would you not think that, had he gone farther than this and worshiped the risen Lord, it would have been recorded? Or did the Church choose to let this one story stand as the supreme evidence of his devotion?

There is, of course, the important fact that his name and his place in the career of Jesus were not forgotten through the years. Though no one put his story in writing for sixty or seventy years, it was preserved in memory, so that when John wrote his Gospel about A.D. 90-100, the name of Nicodemus and what he did were still fresh in his mind.

The evidence, however, is all slim and inconclusive. It proves nothing one way or the other about Nicodemus. But, assuming that the silence of the record is intentional, that this man did not advance beyond what we know of him, his story illustrates a solemn truth: *that position, prestige, and even the great good work of entombing the body of the Lord mean nothing in the Kingdom without rebirth.* Although we hope and pray that we are wrong in our assumption, and that in the secret providence of God Nicodemus *was* "born again," we must not accept this conclusion too readily. Rather, we must regard seriously the silence of Scripture on this matter and take its sober message to our hearts.

His Question and Christ's Answer

But what *do* we know about this man? His significance, as far as John is concerned, lies first of all in the fact that he asked Jesus a fundamental question and received a fundamental answer.

It is true that his need is not stated in *John 3: 1, 2* in the form of a question. It looks as if he was leading up to a question and that Jesus interrupted him before he had a chance to ask it. What he wanted to know was the meaning of the miracles that he had seen Jesus performing. Did they herald the restoration of Israel to its place as a great nation? All the Jews, the Pharisees among them, were anxious about that matter.

But the difference between the rest of that august body and Nicodemus was that Nicodemus took Jesus seriously and thought he might be the promised Messiah, who would bring in Israel's kingdom. The other religious leaders scoffed and scorned the Nazareth carpenter. They tried to ridicule him before the people. But Nicodemus went in the night for a private interview, and he went with the insight that Jesus was "a teacher come from God." The spirit in which he came to Jesus, seeking help, tells us something about him.

In his reply to Nicodemus Jesus drove straight to the point. The miracles he was performing did not have the meaning that the people were putting on them. They were not merely demonstrations of supernatural power. They were forceful illustrations of this fundamental truth: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Take the miracle of changing water into wine. (*Ch. 2: 1-10.*) Nicodemus may not have witnessed it, since it took place in Galilee and he lived in Capernaum; but it illustrated the very lesson that our Lord was giving the inquiring Pharisee. The dull religious life of Israel must be transformed by the rich new wine of the gospel; the Jewish people must be "born again."

But Nicodemus does not understand this teaching. He asks, mystified, "How can these things be?" He knows well enough that Jesus does not mean a physical rebirth, but even a spiritual rebirth is inconceivable. *He*, a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin, a stanch religious leader, *he* must be reborn? That seems hard to accept, and harder still to understand how it can be done. Our Lord assures him that it is possible with God. The Holy Spirit can work this miracle, even in a stubborn Pharisee. But Nicodemus still shakes his head. So Jesus underscores the man's blindness. He can understand physical things, but when it comes to the work of God in transforming human life, he is ignorant and blind. Despite his good intentions in coming to the teacher, Nicodemus betrays a resistance to belief that we cannot ignore. His last words on this occasion are, "How can these things be?"

ttorney for the Defense

Four chapters later in John's Gos-l (*ch. 7*) Nicodemus reappears. By is time the preaching and work of sus have won the acclaim of the ople. His word that Israel must be born has awakened a response in me sensitive and receptive hearts. is true that many who were at-acted to him at first have found the rice of discipleship too high: they went back, and walked no more ith him" (*ch. 6: 66*). But others are nazed at his teaching and find it rovocative and irresistible. Though ey may not understand him or ough they may disagree with him, ey are still compelled to listen to hat he says. (See *ch. 7: 10-46.*)

This popularity enrages the scribes nd Pharisees. This Jesus is usurping eir position as religious arbiter and acher. He is undermining their au-ority. He is demanding that all srael—Pharisees included—be re-orn. He is winning the allegiance of he people. (See *ch. 7: 31.*) They annot let him go on. So they send n armed guard to arrest and im-rison him.

It is when the soldiers return mpty-handed and the Sanhedrin be-omes completely unreasonable with nger that Nicodemus speaks again. His colleagues on the Sanhedrin pro-laim that the people who do not now the law are accursed; they have o right to express an opinion on re-igious matters. In this category they nclude the soldiers who have just eard Jesus and who have exclaimed, 'Never man spake like this man." They include also the common peo-le, who were hearing Jesus gladly. n fact, they include among the ac-ursed Jesus himself, since he was not scribe or a member of the Sanhe-lrin. To this blanket condemnation Nicodemus takes exception. "Is it ccording to our law," he says, "to udge a man before we consider care-ully what he is saying or doing?" Nicodemus rises in defense of Jesus' ight to be heard.

What does this defense of the ac-used tell us about Nicodemus and is relation with Jesus? For one thing, t shows that he did not come away rom his midnight interview antagonis-ic. Though Jesus had spoken of mys-erious and perplexing things, he did ot lose his listener. The Pharisee was ympathetic enough to defend the Teacher. Secondly, it shows that the man has courage. He risks the ill will of his colleagues in making this proposal. He arouses their suspicions about him. He alienates himself from the majority and aligns himself with an unpopular cause. All of this takes courage, and we can surely credit Nicodemus with that virtue. Having said that, however, we stumble over the fact that he apparently went no farther. It took courage to be attorney for the defense but it would take more than Nicodemus displayed to be among the accused and accursed who followed this condemned Redeemer.

In *ch. 12: 42* there is a reference we ought not to ignore, however, if we are trying to give Nicodemus the benefit of the doubt. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him," John writes; "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." Was Nicodemus one of these chief rulers who believed? That is entirely possible; yet again we are tempered in our judgment, for John himself, commenting on the silence of these secret followers, says, "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (*v. 43*). Although men like Peter were openly acclaiming Jesus, men like Nicodemus were keeping silent, though they too, up to a point, believed.

At the Burial

The third and last time Nicodemus is mentioned by name he is assisting Joseph of Arimathaea in burying the crucified body of the Lord. Together, the two of them wrapped the broken body in burial clothes, anointing it with myrrh and aloes "about a hundred pound weight." The ointment was the gift of Nicodemus, and the amount he provided was worthy of a king. (See *Ps. 45: 8.*) Does this mean that he was in this way claiming Christ as his king, or was it only his way of showing the great respect he had for the one who now lay lifeless?

His Meaning for Faith

As Nicodemus passes from the scene, we must ask ourselves the meaning of his story. The last thing

The Scripture Lesson for January 27

Scripture: *John 3: 1-21; 7: 45-52; 19: 38-42*

The Printed Text: *John 3: 1-6; 7: 45-52*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—*John 3: 3.*

John 3: 1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nic-o-de'mus, a ruler of the Jews. *2* This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." *3* Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." *4* Nic-o-de'mus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" *5* Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. *6* That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

* * * * *

Ch. 7: 45 The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" *46* The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!" *47* The Pharisees answered them, "Are you led astray, you also? *48* Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? *49* But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed." *50* Nic-o-de'mus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, *51* "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" *52* They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee."

we know of him is that he helped to bury the body of the Lord God. We do not know whether he ever had the great joy of seeing that body alive again after the resurrection.

Therefore, because there is so much we do not know about him, he must stand as the symbol of a certain kind of disciple who follows Jesus so far but no farther. He is a man who longed for the Kingdom but who, as far as we know, was not willing to accept the rebirth which would make that Kingdom possible for him. He was a man who had courage enough to defend and venerate a great teacher and leader; but again, as far as we know, he did not become acquainted with the risen Lord.

Are there not many in our day who stand in the same position? To them the gospel contains great possibilities and promises, but they stop short of letting God's Spirit work the miracle of salvation in their hearts. To them Jesus Christ is a great moral teacher, but they honor him only as a man, not as the Son of God. They are not willing to take the leap of faith that is required to believe in the resurrection. Their reluctance to accept something so unreasonable is not entirely intellectual. The resurrection poses a spiritual problem for them because they are not willing to make that commitment to Christ as Lord which leads to the conviction that "with God all things [even a resurrection from the dead] are possible." They are good people, many of them, fine, upstanding citizens; they keep the laws of the community and the accepted codes of society; but they do not know the power of the resurrection. Therefore, their lives are impotent.

Yet why should we talk about people in such an objective way? How about *ourselves?* If we have neglected the power of the resurrection in our lives, we are among those who honor a dead Christ, rather than worship a living Lord. We may feel perfectly orthodox in what we believe. Miracles may be no stumbling block to us, even the miracle of Christ's rising from the dead. We may accept the Apostles' Creed without question; we read the Bible, believing faithfully in its words. *But we have not witnessed to the gospel.* We have not entered into the fellowship of Christ's suffering; we have not let Christ live again in us. If so, we are no better than Nicodemus, who could not stifle his doubts. We are not superior to this one who helped to bury the Lord in Joseph's tomb. Orthodoxy is of little avail if it does not result in a faith that is unconquerable and a life that is completely controlled by the God who raised his only Son from the dead.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was the idea of rebirth so difficult for Nicodemus to understand?
2. Why were the Pharisees opposed to Jesus?
3. How can we help people today to see that the Kingdom requires rebirth? What are some of the stumbling blocks that stand in the way of making this concept understood?

Lesson 5 — THE WOMAN WHO LOVED MUCH

(A Pharisee and a Repentant Woman)

Shelter from the world's scorn and sharp-tongued ridicule is to be found in Christ's presence, in the very sanctuary of the church, if we let no man keep us away. In the Gospel narratives we read that often humble people who thus sought out Jesus were discouraged by synagogue officials or civil authorities, by men of some social standing generally, either because they were not good enough for Christ or because Christ was not good enough for them. In the case of wretched offenders, like publicans, leprous beggars, and women of low reputation, it was commonly thought that their sin stood as a permanent barrier between them and the prophet Jesus. No man of God would allow such to touch the hem of his garment. In the end, though, as we all know, the false code of extreme legalists was blasted by the gospel of Christ's love. The Saviour of the world opened wide the doors of the Kingdom.

No past misdeed can keep a repentant sinner from entrance into that haven of peace. And even today, no church bearing the name of Christ has a right to close its doors to the meek, the thirsty, the hungry, the despondent, least of all to those who, despised by society, come to pray and to be forgiven.

The Man Who Had No Need for Forgiveness

In *Luke 7: 36-50* the Pharisee asked Christ to dine with him and his friends. We note that he did not receive Christ with much deference: he did not honor him with the usual courteous acts to a guest of distinction—an affectionate greeting (*ch. 7: 45*), washing of feet (*v. 44*), and anointing (*v. 46*)—nor even, we may well suppose, with a high seat at the dinner table. No, the Pharisee probably asked him to be present chiefly because he wanted to observe him more closely and to hear what he might have to say on controversial questions. For Christ, with his keen perception, his knowledge of the Scriptures, his witty sayings and great popular appeal, was still a desirable guest at anyone's table. Nevertheless the Pharisee probably felt that he was to be congratulated on his broad-mindedness toward Jesus.

Little did the Pharisee suspect that the company in his house would be subjected to another "lesson from life" on the subject of sin and forgiveness. His own conscience was not very tender on that subject. He was one who "loved little" (*v. 47*) and felt that, as he was doing his legal duty, he owed little else to his fellow men. The comfortably self-righteous have reason to be bored with any teaching that makes the most unworthy sinner equal with them, for they hold a privileged position in this life which is hardly commensurate with the low level of

Lessons 5 to 7 and 11 are by Doris Caillet.

ving standard and morality of the an in the street. Furthermore, it ardly occurs to the typical Pharisee o change his ways for the sake of od. He has other means of pleasing od. Yet, in this particular instance, hrist—God in their midst, gave the orldly guests in the Pharisee's house n insight into true forgiveness and a ew life.

Why Mention Sin?

An essential part of the Christian eligion is its preaching about sin, but n presents two difficulties for the onscientious believer. One is that nany people, as far back as they can emember, have seen society attach stigma not so much to the sin itself s to the sinner. To cite an extreme xample, Nathaniel Hawthorne did ot hesitate, in his novel *The Scarlet etter,* to expose the Puritanical at- itude in all its pride and cruelty. He nows us the opposition and censure f an entire village toward an adul- eress who must be publicly shamed nd branded for life. The girl Hester s ruthlessly condemned for her sin vithout regard to her own particular listress. Precisely because of this at- itude, so typical of Pharisaism and o widespread down to our own day, t is seldom that a sinner is loved by ny of his contemporaries in just he way Christ loves him.

The other attitude is a more mod- rn one—at least it is often called he opposite of old-fashioned. The rend today seems to be that we can ove the sinner only if we can excuse he sin. And since our society, being ubjected to progressive ideas and a aster tempo of life, accepts more nd more lax modes of behavior, it an accept the sinner quite readily vithout unduly pricking the poor nan's conscience.

What is the Christian answer? It is bviously not right to condemn the inner because of the sin; nor is it ight to accept the sinner as he is ecause we find the sin excusable or n keeping with the times. Both these ttitudes are negative. One ignores he sinner and all his human poten- ial; the other overlooks sin and thus enies to God the right to communi- ate his will to the world, since his Vord and commandments are neg- ected.

Christ's way, on the other hand, is ever to minimize the grossness of in but yet to love the sinner in com- assion and understanding. The Sav- iour gets to the root of the sinner's trouble by giving him the affection he secretly craves and by assuring him of a new sense of security in the way of salvation.

Forgiveness Begins with Understanding

As we relive the person-to-person contacts with Jesus so beautifully presented in the Gospel of Luke, we find ourselves growing in faith, for that book brims over with gladness and humble gratitude at the deep humanity and compassion of our Lord for the people he knew. Let us turn again to the seventh chapter of Luke's Gospel for one such contact.

Picture the woman who loved much, the motives that drew her to the Master in the house of a proud Pharisee. What had she heard, seen, experienced before in the presence of Christ, that made her follow a generous impulse so gracefully? And what makes that gesture of hers more eloquent than a volume of pious praises? She was one who had sinned and been despised by the majority of the people in her neighborhood, and indeed all over town, for the word had been passed on that none should associate with her. But she went forth to listen to the Galilaean, who rebuked only those who were proud and hypocritical. She heard him bless the poor, the downtrodden, the despised, and the hungry, and felt sure that he, at least, would not turn away if she came near to him.

So when the unfortunate woman went to the Pharisee's house to find the Master, she could not have been afraid. She must have looked in and beheld the radiance of his face. She was not worthy, but the grief that welled up in her heart was somehow hallowed in his presence.

The Scripture Lesson for February 3

Scripture: *Luke 7: 36-50*

The Printed Text: *Luke 7: 36-50*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—*I John 1: 9.*

Luke 7: 36 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat at table. *37* And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, *38* and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. *39* Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." *40* And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?" *41* "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. *42* When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" *43* Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." *44* Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. *45* You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. *46* You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. *47* Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." *48* And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." *49* Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" *50* And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

How Forgiveness Comes

A little alabaster box of rich ointment was the woman's gift. But she also brought to Jesus a richer treasure. She considered that he had walked far in thorny places and upon the stones of the city streets, doing works of mercy untiringly. She paid her tribute. Her tears flowed in relief at the Master's serene acceptance of her as a human being. She saw that he allowed her to minister to him, not as if she were a servant paying him due respect, but with complete absorption in the kindness rendered and in the giver. He showed in his resignation to her tribute that he understood her pain and had himself been patient in suffering. He could take time to let her be healed in his presence. And that without the utterance of a single word.

We have no right to define further the attitude of the Divine toward the sinner. But it is worth noting that when the Master wished to demonstrate the Christian life in action, he "began to wash the disciples' feet" (*John 13: 5*). And he made of it a solemn ceremony, adding that "the servant is not greater than his lord" (*v. 16*), that disciples must minister to one another on equal terms.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the Pharisee's attitude toward sin and forgiveness?
2. Name three ways of facing the problem of sin.
3. Why is it supposed in this interpretation of the Luke account that the sinful woman was not afraid to come to Jesus?
4. How did Jesus receive her?
5. What is meant by the parable of the Two Debtors (*Luke 7: 41-43*)?

How Much Will Be Forgiven?

The Pharisee suffered acute embarrassment to have that woman present in his house and thus accepted by one of his guests. Christ read his thoughts. "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." There follows the parable of the Two Debtors, the woman at his feet being like the one with the greater sins, the greater debt, but also with the greater love and the greater faith. Her sins are forgiven.

But possibly a smaller debt than hers will be harder to repay. The Pharisee has not begun to feel the real presence of the Divine in his house. He cannot see his own need for humility and repentance. Neither can he "go in peace" (*Luke 7: 50*) as the woman is able to do.

It is hard to understand why we are so apprehensive when it comes to letting the Holy Spirit flood in upon our lives. The Holy Spirit is really the power of Christ. It is not a "queer" power that will make us intolerant or hysterical, but it is very sane and holy, a unifying power that gives coherence to the human personality and heals the many ills that beset our souls. It is a power that can make us selfless and thus immeasurably understanding in our dealings with other sinners. It is the power we gain through direct contact with Christ, as the woman who touched his garment in the street, or this devout soul washing his feet with her tears, or the apostles who found him resurrected in their midst. And today the power and love of Christ can come to us through prayer as we call on his name. It can grow as we exercise it on this earth among our own kind. For we, too, are asked "to heal the broken-hearted."

Lesson 6 — "WHO THEN IS SAVED?"

(The Decisions of Two Rich Men)

SALVATION came to the world in the Person of Jesus Christ, for he held out hope to the people that their sins could be forgiven and their lives be relieved from fear and anxiety. Like a shepherd, he guaranteed the safety of his sheep by constant care and watchfulness. We read in Mark's Gospel that Jesus "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things" (*ch. 6: 34*). Thus the rich and poor, handsome and ugly, righteous and sinful, healthy and diseased—all sorts of persons—encountered God in Christ long ago in Galilee, and then and there were given an insight into *what it means to be saved.*

Some were changed from a state of unbelief to deep faith. Many were alienated by the unreasonable demands of the new religion. Others went their way in fear, unable to decide, ever weighing the material against the spiritual, the treasures they owned against those which God held in store for them. They were the ones who did not for a minute want to "be without," and yet who left the deepest need within them unsatisfied to the end of their days.

Thus among the people who heard Jesus were, first, those willing to receive. Because of their unconditional acceptance of the gospel challenge, these few were blessed and assured of saving grace. Others—not discussed in this lesson—were frankly condemned because of their self-righteousness, hypocrisy, coldness, deceit, or cruelty. But there were also respectable individuals who could have no guarantee of salvation, even though they seemed to be living a righteous sort of life, for these people, in spite of their honesty and even their humility, somehow lacked conviction. What would Christ say of them? Why was assurance of salvation denied to them?

A Rigorous Test

The word "salvation" is seldom used in the Gospels. But salvation came to the house of Zacchaeus, the tax collector, one day (*Luke 19: 9*) when Jesus stopped by to visit him. A despised publican, probably known to the populace as "a rotten politician;" a man so small and unprepossessing that he had to climb up a tree to be able to see Jesus as he passed by, Zacchaeus was singled out for recognition: first, with an invitation, which he received cheerfully and with astounding haste (*vs. 5, 6*); then, with such blessings as the man had never been granted in his life.

What a great honor to so insignificant an individual! To be called by name, to be asked to receive Jesus as a guest in his home, and then later to be blessed by the Son of God! Upon whom did Jesus choose to con-

r these blessings? Upon a "sinner," hich is the name that the many who verheard (*v. 7*) called him. But, om Zacchaeus' words and from the ontext of the story, we know this onor had come upon one who could ve up to what was expected of him, ho could be what he was called to e. For Zacchaeus immediately aditted his guilt, set out to repair mages, and in all humility took veral steps in the direction of eternal life.

Of the two rich men in today's lesn who were trying to please God, acchaeus alone succeeded. The ther, the rich young ruler (*ch. 18*), as not willing to give up anything. e did not begin, therefore, to fill ne requirements of salvation. But acchaeus was so impressed by all e had heard of Jesus and, by conrast, so ashamed of the way he rned his living, that he must have eaved a sigh of relief to be rid of is ill-acquired wealth. His response o Jesus was immediate: he would ive half his money to the poor and estore fourfold all that he had unawfully exacted. (*Ch. 19: 8.*) And he result of this decision was stounding. As soon as Zacchaeus had poken, great blessings came upon im. He "belonged"; through the romise of a new life he became "a on of Abraham" (*v. 9*). Spontaneusly accomplishing the will of God, e was now more truly himself than e had ever been before. In other ords, one of the lost became saved. *V. 10.*)

Who is saved?.

He who is penitent.

He who recognizes Christ, not as "good man" whose happiness is to e envied, but as a personal Saviour.

He who, in some measure like hrist, has been "despised and reected of men," or who is not afraid f being despised.

He who understands that Christ as made (or, in the case of Jesus the flesh, was even then making) sacrifice far greater than any of hich a mere man could be capable.

He who no longer thinks of himelf but has a new sense of proporon about life on this earth.

He who has made a break with the ld life and who gives himself to the ne he loves.

He who accepts the obligations of hat he is called to be, i.e., of one ho is restored and re-established by hrist Jesus.

The Scripture Lesson for February 10

Scripture: *Luke 18: 18-30; 19: 1-10*

The Printed Text: *Luke 18: 18-23; 19: 1-10*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."—*Matt. 7: 13, 14.*

Luke 18: 18 And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" *19* And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. *20* You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother." *21* And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." *22* And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." *23* But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich.

* * * * *

Ch. 19: 1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. *2* And there was a man named Zac-chae'us; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. *3* And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. *4* So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. *5* And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zac-chae'us, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." *6* So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. *7* And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." *8* And Zac-chae'us stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." *9* And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. *10* For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

All this Zacchaeus knew after he had met his Saviour and given him his life.

The Road Not Taken

Zacchaeus' spontaneous decision, so eagerly carried out, is in startling contrast to the rich young ruler's hesitation. True, the rich young ruler (*Luke 18: 18-25*) probably had a great deal to consider before he could accept Christ's challenge (*v. 22*)—much wealth, several houses, fashionable friends, devoted slaves. He was doubtless highly regarded in the city, and was, quite possibly, steeped in Hebrew wisdom and Greek learning. Certainly he was a well-spoken, tolerant, and intelligent young man, so candid and honest, in fact, that Jesus "loved him" (*Mark 10: 21*). In view of all these factors, Christ's suggestion was incredible! How could such a person, admired by so many people, sacrifice everything and disappear from society? How could he do anything as drastic as follow Jesus, with all that such a step implied? How could he give up a way of life in which he was so deeply, so inextricably, rooted?

So it happened that instead of one reaction—a glad, tremulous, but deeply felt YES—the rich young ruler had many forebodings. Problems of all sorts crowded in upon him. He was, like most people harassed by possessions, incurably self-centered, and, like the cultured and prosperous, hard put to it to change his way of life. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (*Luke 18: 24.*) Why does prosperity weigh so heavily in the balance, over against the salvation of the soul?

And yet . . . our lives are full of "and yet's." And yet, we say, we might have done it. And yet . . . that way pointed to happiness we could

never otherwise experience. And yet . . . the spiritual matters more than the material. And yet . . . conscience must mean more than all these other things—convention, comfort, economic security. And yet . . . what have we done? We have taken a road "whence there is no turning." And we, like the rich young ruler (*v. 23*), go away sorrowful.

Christ's invitation comes to most of us. "What is right?" "What should I do?" "Why, in spite of all these material blessings, am I dissatisfied?" Whenever we ask such questions, whenever we are faced with inner distress, we experience again the rich young ruler's dilemma: spiritual good or the world's good; eternal life or temporary prosperity. The struggle that ensues does us no harm. It is God, opening our eyes to what we are, showing us our situation, and leaving us with a choice—whether to go right on doing the wrong things or to follow a new course of action. Surely the young ruler's decision to live out another of those perfectly proper but uneventful and inconsequential lives is not to be envied! When one considers the tremendous possibilities in what Christ suggested, it is not.

But the rich young ruler refused to take the step. Although he was in Christ's blessed presence, he did not really listen to Jesus. If he had, more of the advantages and fewer of the disadvantages of the new life would have been clear to him. Instead, he merely looked the other way and left the Master standing alone.

To God All Things Are Possible

When the disciples saw the rich young ruler go on his way sadly, they asked, "Who then can be saved?" (*v. 26*). Perhaps they reasoned that he deserved a better fate, since his wealth *apparently* showed that he was approved by God. For it was commonly believed among the Jews that prosperity was an external sign of God's favor. The fact that such a man could not be assured of entrance into the Kingdom was to them a rather puzzling teaching. If he could not inherit eternal life, *who* then had a chance?

The answer was, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (*v. 27*). In the first place, Christ's sense of values is very different from our own. We may single out as "saved" fine, educated, poised individuals, or else persons we find in some unique way admirable. But Christ often grants forgiveness of sins and the assurance of salvation to humble people—a despised leper, a fallen woman, a conniving lawyer, a rapacious taxgatherer like Zacchaeus. In Christ's own lifetime those saved were in many instances individuals whom society habitually scorned. But Jesus stopped to talk to them and to grant the forgiveness they craved.

(Continued on page 65)

Questions for Discussion

1. Contrast the reactions of the rich young ruler and Zacchaeus to Christ's challenge.
2. Name certain basic requirements for salvation.
3. Why are people so often more eager to please the world than to "save their own souls"?
4. Can we know whether or not others are saved? Has a Christian the right to ask this question?
5. How did the assurance of salvation come to Zacchaeus? Can a follower of Christ today have the same assurance?

Lesson 7 — MARY AND MARTHA BELIEVE

(The Family at Bethany)

When God came into the world in the Person of Jesus Christ, the rhythm of routine living was disrupted. Worldly concerns were laid aside. Death and sin were overcome. Mary and Martha saw the Saviour forgive and bless the living and even raise the dead. The cycle of life itself was broken. Only love, trust, humility, mattered. In the household, the feverish activity of daily chores and tiresome gossip were found insufficient. Indeed, compared to the all-pervading love of God and the assurance of eternal life, these preoccupations seemed very petty. What really mattered was a consecrated life.

"Waiting Upon the Lord"

Jesus, in the days of his flesh, used to stop over occasionally in the house of friends. And these people were glad indeed to see him and to entertain him, even for just a day. We have in the Gospels the story of two women who waited upon the Lord with kindness and devotion—Mary and Martha in the household of Lazarus. The fervent attentiveness of the one and the feverish activity of the other have become legendary as an explanation of two types of discipleship in the home. One woman is said to make meditation upon spiritual truth her central concern, whereas the other is forever busy with trifling details and often critical of merely passive discipleship. Both may have been equally conscientious in their attempts to please the Master, but Mary alone understood what really mattered.

Was Martha, then, to be blamed? "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." (*Luke 10: 41.*) Unlike Mary, Martha had a thousand concerns—the chores to be done, the people to be served, the details to be attended to, the opinion of others, and their physical requirements. Therefore she hurried, bustling about the kitchen as if her life depended upon the successful performance of her job, seeing that her guest, the beloved Master, was comfortable and well cared for. Martha's sincerity was genuine: she did want to please. Her only trouble was that, in her concentration on the physical needs of others, she had ignored her own deep spiritual need. Jesus' gentle rebuke should have served as more than a reminder of her shortsightedness. It ought to have made her realize how blind she had been. For there, sitting not two yards away, was Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

No wonder, then, that Mary sat at his feet, transfixed, dwelling on his

The Scripture Lesson for February 17

Scripture: *Luke 10: 38-42; John 11: 1-45; 12: 1, 2*

The Printed Text: *Luke 10: 38-42; John 11: 1-5, 24-27*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "She said to him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.' "—*John 11: 27.*

Luke 10: 38 Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. *39* And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. *40* But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." *41* But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; *42* one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

* * * * *

John 11: 1 Now a certain man was ill, Laz'a-rus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. *2* It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Laz'a-rus was ill. *3* So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." *4* But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Laz'a-rus. . . .

24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." *25* Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, *26* and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" *27* She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world."

ery word with eagerness and deep ntentment. Soon Jesus would go ck to Jerusalem to face treachery d death. He had just a little time spend in the Bethany house, and ery minute of it must count. Mary w "the one thing needful" in the man situation because she could t help herself: she wanted to know od's will better, to understand more, love more, and to prepare herself sacrifice more for him. Mary real-ed in all humility that, in the pres-ce of Jesus, she was in touch with od. She must therefore refuse to ok on her life as mere routine, or the times in which she lived as rmal times, or on the Master as ordinary guest. It was not enough iefly to acknowledge his presence d then to go on to pressing little oblems as if he were not there.

n the Hour of Crisis

If we pause to think over this in-dent at Bethany and the well-served rebuke to Martha, it may artle us to realize that in Christ's fetime there were many who ac-ually believed life should go on just e same, whether or not the Son of od was there. Martha wanted to now why Mary should be allowed neglect the duties at hand. (*V. 40.*) e was vexed that Jesus should sanc-on the interruption of household utine by making himself available the first questioner or seeker after uth. Why could not the rhythm of ily living go on as if nothing had ppened?

The answer is obvious to us today: e ought not to proceed as mere utine if we live it in the Master's esence. Christ lends a new signifi-nce to every moment spent in his esence. Time can no longer rule. piritual reality—God here present—atters more than physical comfort the attainment of worldly success. But it was not until the hour of isis that Martha probably came to alize fully just what Jesus meant hen he said that Mary had chosen e "good part." In the account of e raising of Lazarus (*John 11: 1-4*) e see how much both Mary and artha relied upon the presence of hrist in times of danger and fear. zarus fell ill. Probably Mary kept tch and prayed night and day that sus would come. And doubtless artha nursed Lazarus, letting the usehold chores go. But constant ayer and care were not enough. Early one morning Lazarus breathed his last. "If Jesus had been here, if he only could have come," cried Mary, "our brother would not have died." (See *vs. 21, 32.*) She wept over Lazarus. But it was too late. Lazarus' body was sealed in the tomb, and according to the old Jewish custom, mourners had come to be with the sisters and to pray with them.

Dry-eyed after the first impact of shock and grief, Mary continued her vigil. Thus she watched through the second day and the third, praying, we may well believe from what we know of her (*vs. 20, 28, 31, 32*), with all her heart and all her strength for comfort in this deep bereavement.

Then Jesus came, but not until the fourth day. When the Master at last reached Bethany, the reactions of the sisters were again in marked contrast. Martha ran out to meet him. She assured him of her faith, if not wholly in his power to raise Lazarus from the grave (*v. 24*), at least in his Messiahship (*v. 27*). Mary sat at home, waiting. And when she heard from Martha that the Master was calling for her, she went to him and crumpled weeping at his feet (*vs. 32, 33*). Words were hardly necessary. Jesus understood her sorrow and yearning.

Yet he groaned within himself that the faith of one who had sat at his feet listening to his words should be so shaken in a time of grief. Mary's cry and the question of some of the mourners (*v. 37*) symbolized to him the unbelief of the world.

The miracle at the tomb cannot be passed by in silence. For the sisters it was the supreme test. Were they at long last, in the very hour of crisis, consecrated to the divine will? Did they have faith in "the resurrection, and the life" (*v. 25*)? Would they unquestioningly accept this overcoming of death? Would they recognize the fact of Christ as it so intimately affected their lives, as it was proved there before their very eyes, in the presence of the risen Lazarus?

"Only Believe"

It is a commonplace to say that we show our mettle in hours of crisis. We can go about our business for years without proving much as to our faith or lack of it. But when put to the test, we either measure up or fail. So it is when sorrow strikes. Unless we can in the tragic hour rely on hope, on love, on the reality of Christ for our lives, on the abiding truths that give meaning to our existence, we shall be utterly alone.

When the time of crisis came in the lives of the sisters at Bethany, Martha was not quite sure of a victorious outcome. She hesitated at the tomb. (*V. 39.*) It is not easy to accept an extraordinary pattern. That birth, youth, old age, death, should follow one another in an inevitable sequence was normal; but that resurrection should succeed the death Martha had witnessed four days before was a challenge to faith such as few mortals have ever encountered. Here the normal sequence of life and death was broken by Jesus, even as the ordinary pattern of day-by-day routine in the Bethany home had been. Christ overcame death, even as he had overcome sin and indifference. If only Martha could have believed implicitly all that her words of faith implied! (Cf. *vs. 39, 40* and *v. 27.*)

On the other hand, Mary's wordless trust, evidenced in varying degrees in both the episodes we are studying this week, somehow serves to convey to us a deep and yearning faith. It is Mary's secret that we would probe, seeking therewith to enrich our own spiritual life. Though she was mute in the crisis, she seemed to submit willingly to whatever Christ commanded. She did not hesitate at the tomb but showed the same readiness as when she had sat at Jesus' feet in humble trust. For Mary had "chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (*Luke 10:42*).

What Mary had learned soon after her conversion is what the consecrated Christian also must learn: that he who would give must first receive; that he who would serve and be a blessing to others must first experience to the uttermost the blessing of Christ's presence; that he who would give himself must be able to give his best self. Like Mary, he must remember how much God in Christ was ready to sacrifice for the world. It will then be plain that a life consecrated in love, reverence, and hope is our richest gift, and one that can be offered in quietness and humility.

Questions for Discussion

1. What were Jesus' contacts with the family at Bethany?
2. What are two ways of "waiting upon the Lord"? Which seemed the more valid to Jesus?
3. Explain the ways in which the faith of the two women of Bethany, Mary and Martha, was tested after the death of Lazarus.

Lesson 8 — THREE PRIVILEGED FRIENDS

(Peter, James, and John)

How many of the twelve disciples can you name quickly? You might bog down on some of the men you know little about, but there's a good chance that your list would begin with the names of Peter, James, and John. These are the best-known members of the little band that rallied around Jesus during his days among men.

This may be because these three men were the only disciples with Jesus on several significant occasions: when Jairus' daughter was raised, at the transfiguration, in the Garden of Gethsemane. They seem to have had a special relationship to our Lord.

Why were these men singled out for unique experiences of high privilege? How was Jesus preparing them for enlarged responsibility? Why did they need these experiences and this discipline? What do we learn from their lives about the requirements of modern discipleship? These men became the leaders of the Early Church. Therefore, anything that we can learn from their experiences with Jesus will serve to make us better fitted to do his work in the world and the Church today.

Vision on the Mountain

It is well that the lesson begins with the transfiguration, at which time Peter, James, and John were alone with Jesus, having been led by him "up a high mountain apart by themselves" (*Mark 9:2,* R.S.V.). This act of choosing these three friends to go with him up to a lonely height for prayer (as *Luke 9:28* tells us) affirms a fact that we need to keep in mind throughout this lesson: *Jesus saw possibilities of leadership in Peter, James, and John, despite the fact that they were not yet fitted for it.* In that knowledge he called them, and with that confidence he sought to train them. Elizabeth Barrett Browning once wrote to Robert:

> What hast *thou* to do
> With looking from the lattice-lights at me,
> A poor, tired, wandering singer, singing through
> The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree?
> The chrism is on thine head,— on mine, the dew,— . . .

That is surely our feeling when we think of our own condition. What has Christ "to do with looking from the lattice-lights at me"? Yet Peter, James, and John, who appeared no more promising in their day than some of us do in ours, were chosen to share this great experience.

For Peter, James, and John, the transfiguration confirmed their growing belief that Jesus was the Messiah sent from God, and destined to usher in the divine Kingdom of prosperity and justice. On the mountain's slope that night they heard, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" (*Mark 9:7,* R.S.V.). The fact that they themselves were being addressed assured them that they were intended

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Lessons 8, 9, 12, 13 are written by Dr. Robert Bonthius, of the department of religion, The College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio.

be his disciples. Calvin wrote that we want to be sure we are of the ct, we need only inquire whether d "has committed us to Christ." d if we doubt that Christ has re-ived us, "he obviates this doubt, by ely offering himself as our Shep-rd, and declaring that if we hear s voice, we shall be numbered nong his sheep.".

eeking Preferment

Was it because these three dis-ples were men of unusual virtue or en of marked spiritual qualities at they were allowed to witness the ansfiguration? As we pursue their ory, we must conclude that Peter, mes, and John did *not* earn this ivilege. And this is really the heart our lesson: the men God chooses e not selected so much for what ey *are* as for what they may be-me, under his control.

For Peter, James, and John, the iginal aim of life was personal eatness. This is clearly indicated *Mark 10: 35-40.* Spurred perhaps the preference given to Peter hen he made the great confession a w days previous, James and John ought out Jesus privately, to ask for he two most prominent of the twelve rones promised earlier (*Matt. 9: 28*). Through this selfish demand r preferment, these men revealed ow unfit they were for leadership in he Kingdom at this time. Therefore, esus undertook to transform their oncept of greatness. It was not a atter of *surpassing* others; rather, was a matter of *serving* them. He ountered their request with a ques-on: "Are you able to drink the up that I drink, or to be baptized ith the baptism with which I am aptized?" (*Mark 10: 38,* R.S.V.) n other words, "Can you endure olation, opposition, death for the ke of the Kingdom?" Jesus was king nothing less than *the funda-ental question of whether or not mes and John could forget them-lves and their petty ambitions.*

Paradoxically, self-sacrifice is the ice of "preferment" in God's so-ety. Writing out of his experience a psychologist, Gordon W. Allport ices the general conclusion of ex-rts in this field that "passing from lf-interest to self-disinterestedness" the most difficult and yet the most sential task of maturity.

The clear teaching of Jesus in this ssage is that pre-eminence in the Kingdom he came to establish is of an entirely different order from the kind of preferment uppermost in the minds of Peter, James, and John. They were looking for a Kingdom of successful competition, one in which as Jews under the leadership of their Messiah they would put down the mighty from their seats and would themselves be exalted as rulers over their former masters. However, Jesus endeavored to teach them that greatness consisted of service. "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all." (*Ch. 10: 43, 44,* R.S.V.) *"To be" means "not to be in competition"; "to*

Questions for Discussion

1. (*Mark 9: 2.*) How did Peter, James, and John know they were chosen by Jesus? How do we know today that we are chosen to do his work?

2. (*Mark 10: 35-40.*) What aim of life did James and John reveal in their request? Is this aim common in our day?

3. (*Mark 10: 35-40.*) What did Jesus mean by the "cup" and the "baptism" that the disciples must receive? What is the nature of *Christian* suffering?

4. (*Mark 10: 41-45.*) How did Jesus define the aim of life in the Kingdom?

5. (*Acts 4: 13, 18-20.*) Can the change that came over Peter and John transform us also?

The Scripture Lesson for February 24

Scripture: *Mark 9: 2; 10: 35-45; 14: 32-42; Luke 8: 41, 42, 49-56; 9: 28-36; Acts 4: 13-22*

The Printed Text: *Mark 9: 2; 10: 35-40; Acts 4: 13, 18-20*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."—*Acts 4: 20.*

Mark 9: 2 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them.

* * * * *

Ch. 10: 35 And James and John, the sons of Zeb'e-dee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." *36* And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" *37* And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." *38* But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" *39* And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; *40* but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

* * * * *

Acts 4: 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. . . . *18* So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. *19* But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; *20* for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

THE LAST SUPPER

be" means "to be useful to others."

C. S. Lewis, in *The Screwtape Letters,* drives home the Christian meaning of success. God's will, he indicates, is not that men should be concerned to humiliate themselves any more than it is that men should entertain grandiose notions. Rather, God seeks to develop each man "to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, and know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being any more (or less) or otherwise glad at having done it than he would be if it had been done by another."[1] God wants to kill men's "animal self-love as soon as possible; but it is his long-term policy . . . to restore to them a new kind of self-love—a charity and gratitude for all selves, including their own; when they [men] have really learned to love their neighbors as themselves, they will be allowed to love themselves as their neighbors."[1]

Christian Suffering

Jesus assured James and John that they would receive his cup and his baptism. They would suffer. They would be able to endure the sacrifices that were necessary to inherit "position" in the Kingdom. What, literally, are the "cup" and the "baptism" to which Jesus referred? *They symbolize the isolation, opposition, and death that are unavoidably encountered in becoming useful to God and man.* Christian suffering is not something disciples are supposed to seek with an unhealthy desire for martyrdom. Jesus did not seek it. He prayed that he might not have to drink his cup. *Christian suffering is bearing whatever evil needs to be borne in order to be faithful.* Jesus accepted isolation, opposition, and death because these were the necessary outcome of his appointed work. The essence of cup-drinking and baptism is a willingness to undertake the discipline that must accompany our particular aim in life.

In a world like ours, which is prone to dismiss Jesus' call to service as airy idealism hardly relevant to the stark necessities of survival, men need to be challenged. Was he right in training Peter, James, and John in the way of costly concern for others? Does it not seem more realistic to maintain that the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong? Ashley Montagu, the distinguished anthropologist, thinks not. He believes that both animal and human societies depend for their survival, not upon conflict, but upon cooperation. On the basis of his findings, he writes, "Physiologically, biologically, psychologically, and socially, [man] can retain his health and flourish only in love of, and cooperation with, his fellow man." The professor is saying what Jesus said two thousand years ago. Our Lord, teaching his disciples to be servants, showed himself to be the Realist of all time.

The Men They Became

Jesus knew that Peter, James, and John were capable of this great living and dying. The last incident in our lesson reveals the transformed lives of these "uneducated, common men" (*Acts 4:13,* R.S.V.). In The Acts we see them engaged in the work to which they had been called by their Lord, wholly committed to it, preaching and healing without one thought of the consequences to themselves. Peter and John have been put on trial in Jerusalem by the Sanhedrin that so shortly before had condemned their Master to death. The issue, as Peter himself explains, is "a good deed done to a cripple" (*v. 9,* R.S.V.). The healing was preceded and followed by bold proclamations of Jesus' resurrection and by invitations to the populace to receive him. This Christian movement threatened the power and prestige of the Sanhedrin, official custodians of the Jewish religion; therefore, the officials strove to prevent Peter and John from witnessing.

The courageous reply of Peter and John reveals the degree to which Christ's Spirit had by this time become theirs: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (*vs. 19, 20,* R.S.V.). No trace here of the men who jockeyed for personal prestige and centered their lives around the aim of being first! The Sanhedrin "recognized that they had been with Jesus" (*v. 13,* R.S.V.), we are told. They had not only been with him; they had also lost their lives to him. And in doing so, they had found them. The lives of these men remind us that men can drink Christ's cup without any assurance that they will be exalted, and that it is just this training in suffering that leads to exaltation.

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[1] From *The Screwtape Letters,* by C. S. Lewis. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

Lesson 9 — "SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT"

("Our Beloved Barnabas")

The Early Church needed men with a broad outlook. Its first leaders were provincial folk who were unprepared for the development of Christianity into a world-wide movement. To them, Christianity was the fulfilment of hopes they held as Jews. Embracing Christ as the Messiah whom God had promised to their people, they proclaimed him as such to their Jewish brethren. They did not go to the Gentiles. Salvation was for the Jews and for the few pagans who might be converted to Judaism. So Peter, James, John, and the other disciples believed. True, Peter himself baptized the Roman centurion Cornelius and his household, Gentiles all, into the Christian way without requiring circumcision (the mark of adherence to Judaism). But this was not done easily, without great searching of conscience, and later events in which Peter and the whole Jerusalem church took part reveal the ingrained narrowness of the Palestinian disciples. It was into the midst of men with this restricted view that God placed Barnabas, the cultured Levite from the island of Cyprus. His broad sympathies, based upon intimate acquaintance with the Gentile world, had much to do with the way the Early Church broke out of its shell of Jewish sectarianism.

A *Liberal Giver*

A liberal deed first draws Barnabas to our attention in the Bible. During the first flush of enthusiasm after Pentecost, when it seems the Church expected Christ's return at any moment, Christians in Jerusalem spontaneously sold their worldly goods and pooled the proceeds for the benefit of the poor among them. Barnabas is cited as the exemplar of this unique communism. He "sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet." (*Acts 4: 37,* R. S. V.)

The field he sold may have been a rich one, if it lay in the fertile island of Cyprus. The spirit in which he gave over the profits was remarkably uncalculating. It was the spirit of one who had caught the meaning of the Christian use of property.

It would be a mistake to focus on what Barnabas did with his property rather than on the attitude toward material goods that it represents. The issue here is not whether Barnabas should have liquified his assets but that he sensed with unusual clarity the relationship between Christianity and property: *allegiance to Christ requires making him Lord of one's property as well as of one's life.* To Barnabas this meant that he should disburse his earthly possessions. Others in his own day did not so construe the gospel. (See *ch. 5: 4.*)

Most Christians since Pentecost have recognized that there are other and perhaps better ways of using property for the good of God's children than getting rid of it outright. But for Barnabas material goods were means of doing God's work in the world, and to that end he used them. Luther once wrote that the purpose of property is "the aid of those who are in want." In a world that hugged its treasure to itself, treating possessions as ends in themselves rather than as means to human ends, Barnabas set an example of practical consecration.

It is in connection with the record of his liberality that the book of The Acts calls Barnabas "Son of encouragement" (*ch. 4: 36,* R. S. V.). However, other references to Barnabas in the New Testament are required if we are to learn the extent to which he encouraged the Early Church. It was not his liberal action so much as his liberal outlook, his sympathy with untried people and new departures, that made him an encourager—which means a good adviser as well as a comforter. To this aspect of Barnabas' role in the Christian community let us turn. *In three crucial instances, Barnabas' counsel led the Church to new and more inclusive understanding of its earthly mission.*

Defending an Unpopular Man

The first of these instances, recorded in *ch. 9: 26, 27,* shows Barnabas serving as an intermediary between the converted Saul and the Church Fathers in Jerusalem. The Acts reports that Saul visited Jerusalem soon after his Damascus-road experience. But, we are told, "they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple" (*v. 26,* R. S. V.). When you consider that Saul had been the notorious enemy of Christians, this apprehension on the part of the church in Jerusalem is understandable. Still, fear of other men often prevents discovery of the truth about them. It was so in this case. Only Barnabas was unafraid of Saul. Perhaps he had known him in school days. Or it may be that Barnabas visited Damascus after Saul's conversion, even returning with him to Jerusalem, to verify the unbelievable change in his life.

In any case, with that freedom from suspicion so characteristic of him, Barnabas took Saul under his wing. On the strength of Barnabas' recommendation, the elders in Jerusalem received him. Indeed, shortly thereafter, they went as far as to protect him when his disputations with other Greek-speaking Jews in the capital city aroused their desire to kill him. Thus, through the good offices of Barnabas, the conservative leaders of Christianity admitted into their circle the man destined to break the grip that Jewish law maintained upon the Christian Church at that time.

Investigating a Revolution

A second chance for Barnabas to display his abilities as a wise counselor came when the Jerusalemites chose him to investigate the mass conversion of Gentiles up in Antioch, Syria. There, for the first time anywhere, Gentiles were responding to Christ in large numbers. The Acts indicates that it was the first time Gentiles were really given a chance to respond; for up to this time (probably about A.D. 44) the disciples had not addressed themselves, except in special cases, to any but their fellow Jews. Even the converted Hellenists had ranged up and down the Palestinian coastland and over the island of Cyprus, preaching only in synagogues. But now these Hellenistic witnesses began to preach directly to Gentiles in Antioch, the capital of Syria.

In principle, these disciples prob-

ably saw nothing extraordinary in their actions. Being themselves citizens of two worlds, the Hellenistic by birth and the Jewish by faith, they knew Gentiles as persons rather than as hated foreigners. Once approached with the good news, Gentiles in Antioch responded. And their response caused Jerusalem to send an investigator. There was understandable concern on the part of the Jerusalem church over the mushroom growth of a Christian community that apparently was not required to conform to the Jewish law before receiving Christ.

What Barnabas discovered both delighted and impressed him. "When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose." (*Acts 11: 23,* R. S. V.) Now think of the reaction a certain type of investigator might have had to this departure: he might have bristled with questions about the propriety of receiving uncircumcised "Greeks" directly into the fellowship of the Church, or he might have been very skeptical about the depth or even the possibility of their repentance. It is easy to see the hand of God in the fact that it was Barnabas, and not a provincial Palestinian, who was sent to Antioch. He saw nothing to disapprove of; he accepted the conversion of Gentiles as he did the conversion of Jews, and he rejoiced.

Now Antioch was an unusual city in which to find Christians springing up. It was a city of indolence, as Gibbon the historian describes it. "The warmth of the climate disposed the natives to the most intemperate enjoyment of tranquillity and opulence," he writes, "and the lively licentiousness of the Greeks was blended with the hereditary softness of the Syrians. Fashion was the only law, pleasure the only pursuit, and splendor of dress and furniture was the only distinction of the citizens of Antioch." "To remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose" (*v. 23,* R. S. V.) in Antioch was to swim against the current of common life. It must have meant a great deal to these young Christians fresh from paganism to have a representative of the Jerusalem church commend them. And not only that. Barnabas determined to stay on with them. Hearing that Saul was laboring in nearby Tarsus, Barnabas sought his assistance. "He brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they [Barnabas and Saul] met with the church, and taught a large company of people." Under Barnabas' supervision, Saul was being further developed for his own mighty ministry to the Roman world.

A Foreign Missionary

In a third instance, the most momentous event in the life of the Early Church from one point of view, Barnabas, with his counsel, strongly influenced the Church's understanding of its task. He had an important role in the inauguration of missionary work by the church in Antioch. Up to this time Christianity had been spread by the independent efforts of many witnesses. But now Antioch was inspired to delegate missionaries, Barnabas and Saul, and send them out, supported by this church. The record in *ch. 13: 1-3* does not allow us to describe the part Barnabas may have played in inaugurating this "foreign missions"

The Scripture Lesson for March 2

Scripture: *Acts 4: 32-37; 9: 20-27; 11: 19-30; 13: 1-4; 14: 8-15; 15: 1-6, 22-39*

The Printed Text: *Acts 4: 36, 37; 9: 26, 27; 11: 19-26; 13: 1-3*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."—*Acts 11: 24.*

Acts 4: 36 Thus Joseph who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas (which means, Son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, *37* sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

* * * * *

Ch. 9: 26 And when he had come to Jerusalem he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. *27* But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

* * * * *

Ch. 11: 19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoe-ni'ci-a and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none except Jews. *20* But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cy-re'ne, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. *21* And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. *22* News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. *23* When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose; *24* for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a large company was added to the Lord. *25* So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; *26* and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians.

* * * * *

Ch. 13: 1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Symeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cy-re'ne, Man'a-en a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. *2* While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." *3* Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

ork. Suffice it to say that the urch's action reflects the same eadth of vision that Barnabas, its der, is known to have possessed. is noteworthy that although The ts features Antioch as the center missionary activities in the Gen- e world, in contrast to the church Jerusalem as the Jewish center, ere never seems to have been valry or bad feeling between them. ne one was the mother church of wish Christianity; the other was coming the mother church of entile Christianity. Yet neither ade offensive comparisons. After sting and praying, the churchmen Antioch laid their hands on Barna- s and Saul and sent them off—off Cyprus and to Asia Minor for hat has come to be called Paul's rst missionary journey. It was on this journey that Saul emerged as the dominant one of the two. He became Paul, the chief proponent of Christianity in the Gentile world.

The completion of this journey brings to a close the Biblical account of Barnabas' work. In the light of the subsequent development of Christianity, we can appreciate the judgment of some that he ought to be placed in the front rank of the founders of Christianity. The "Son of encouragement" indeed—the encourager of both Christian giving and Christian evangelism without restriction!

Questions for Discussion

1. In the light of the story of Barnabas' selling his field and bringing the proceeds to the apostles, what is the Christian view of property?
2. Do our churches restrict their minister to certain groups, as the earliest Christians in Palestine did? How could we be more "inclusive"?
3. Can you name other historic instances in which "Antioch" groups have sprung up and "Jerusalem" churches have looked askance at them? Do any such situations prevail today?
4. On what basis can conservative and liberal churches and denominations co-operate? What might Barnabas say? (See especially *Acts 11 : 23.*)

Lesson 10 — PAUL, A MAN IN CHRIST

(Paul, a Prisoner for Christ)

A PARLOR game that has become a popular radio program is called "Truth or Consequences." A person is asked a question, and, if he cannot nswer it, he is made to pay for his ignorance by some kind of foolish or ifficult forfeit. The master of ceremonies dins into the ear of the contestant, If you can't tell the truth, you must pay the consequences!"

The apostle Paul faced a different version of the game. He faced dire onsequences just because he knew and told the truth. Actually, his experi- nce is more lifelike. It is easy to escape consequences by ignoring the truth nd its implications; we are more likely to pay dearly for following with esolution the truth that we know.

Confronted by the truth that is in Jesus Christ, the consequences can be ot to our liking. As we consider briefly what happened to Paul as a result f his loyalty to Jesus Christ, we may ask ourselves if something like his xperiences is *what should happen to us* as a consequence of following the ruth incarnate.

n Eloquent Silence

Contrary to what we might expect the case of a person who left us uch an abundant body of his cor- espondence and who had as compe- ent a biographer as Paul had in his ompanion Luke, we really know very ttle about Paul's personal life and ie intimate biographical details iat make such fascinating reading. here are many scattered remarks om which we may reconstruct the cture, but it is like a jigsaw puzzle ith some pieces missing; there are g gaps that leave us quite dis- tisfied. Luke, in The Acts, gives us o description of the man; Paul, in s letters, drops no hints about his omestic affairs. We have many questions about him that we wish we could answer, and they are not idle curiosity either. How helpful it would be, for example, if we could know whether Paul had ever seen Jesus in the flesh! But Paul is eloquently silent on this question. We are not to know the answer.

Now this was not mere carelessness on his part. It was a carefully considered reticence. To him, Paul as Paul, as a flesh-and-blood person, was unimportant for the record. Paul was not writing to glorify himself. The only thing that mattered about him was *the Christ that was in him.* Of this only would he write. All else was completely subordinated to this purpose. Therefore, any hints of knowing Paul as a human being are omitted in order to highlight to the greatest degree possible his spiritual experience of knowing Christ. This reluctance of Paul's to speak of himself is clearly brought out in *II Cor., ch. 11,* where he is tortured to have to mention personal matters. He hates to talk of his afflictions. He keeps protesting, "I speak as a fool," because what sounds like boasting is so contrary to his nature and to the purpose of his writing. But it was necessary in this case to defend his record against his detractors.

Paul's whole life was centered in Jesus Christ. He was a man *"in Christ,"* one of his favorite phrases to describe the relationship of the Christian to his Lord. Recall the discussion in our first lesson on "abiding," and you will comprehend something of what it meant to Paul to have this relationship. And to develop the idea further, we may examine this verse from today's lesson: "I count all things but loss . . . that I may know him [Christ], and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (*Phil. 3: 8, 10*).

To Know Him

The first purpose of the Christian life must be a keen, overwhelming desire to know Jesus Christ. Now

what does it mean, *to know him?* Certainly it means something more than acquiring certain facts about him, that is, knowing who his parents were, where he was born, what he did, how he lived and died.

One way to understand what this means would be to consider some Biblical metaphors. Christ is the vine, we are the branches. Good branches, deriving their life from the vine, bear much fruit. "To know him" is to be to him as a branch is to a vine. Again, the Church is Christ's body. He is its head, and in its various functions it receives its power from the head. "To know him" is to be part of his body. Or again, the Church is like stones in a building whose foundation is Christ. "To know him" is to build on that foundation.

Whatever comparison helps us to understand it, the point is that, with Paul and with us, knowing Christ means to be intimately bound up with him as disciple and Lord. He is so much our life that we have no life apart from him. *Who am I, John Smith or Betty Gray? I am nothing; "Christ is all, and in all." That's what it means "to know him."*

Paul freely admitted that as yet his knowledge of Christ, so understood, was fragmentary and incomplete. In all humility, he made no pretense of being completely "in him." In fact, he would not be completely in Christ until the Day of Resurrection and Judgment. But he pressed on, undaunted by past failures, in the confidence that his knowledge would grow and that he would me more and more united in perfect fellowship with his Lord.

How long did Paul have to grow in his knowledge of Jesus Christ? The *Westminster Study Bible* suggests that Paul's conversion took place about A.D. 34 and that his execution in Rome happened about 64. For some thirty years, therefore, he lived "in Christ." Philippians was probably one of the last things he wrote. So notice the growth. In 34, when he was stricken blind, he cried out, "Who art thou, Lord?" He did not know Christ at all, as far as really knowing him was concerned. But to the people at Philippi he can write that magnificent description of his Lord's true nature and work found in *Phil. 2: 5-11.* Read it reverently, for no one has ever, before or since, displayed such knowledge of Christ Jesus as Paul reveals in this letter.

Yet he said he had not yet attained! He still had more to know! And since Philippians was written in the shadow of his execution, under the premonition of death, we can believe that Paul was anticipating the final, perfect, and complete knowledge he would receive at the resurrection.

"The Power of His Resurrection"

Another characteristic of Paul's life was that in it he had constant experiences of the power of Christ's resurrection. The best way to see this power at work in Paul's life is to do as he himself does in the passage from Philippians where he contrasts the Paul who had been with the Paul who now is. His life is a "before-and-after" picture.

Before: Before Paul knew Christ, he was a man without power. It is not necessary to rehearse here the well-known facts about this man when his name was Saul. They are amply recorded in Scripture. (See *Acts 22: 3-29* for one account.) The point is that he was a bigoted, traditional reactionary, zealous for one thing only: the preservation of his religious laws. Yet he was an utterly impotent, absolutely powerless individual. He had the power to breathe out "threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" and to make "havoc of the church" (*Acts 9: 1; 8: 3*), but he had no spiritual power. And he knew it! His weakness in this regard made him all the more zealous in the exercise of physical force. Luther, centuries later, seeking vainly for salvation in the denials and self-inflicted tortures of his monastic cell, was like Paul before his conversion: a man thoroughly frustrated in his efforts to work out his salvation, yet keeping at the work because he did not know what else to do.

After: After his conversion, however, Paul became a dynamo that no one could ever control. The power of Christ's resurrection flowed into him full force, and that spectacular career was launched. He overcame the opposition to his ministry to the Gentiles; he traveled tirelessly, leaving in

The Scripture Lesson for March 9

Scripture: *Acts 20: 17-27; 22: 3-29; II Cor. 11: 24-33; Phil. 3: 4b-17*

The Printed Text: *Phil. 3: 4b-14*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."—*Phil. 3: 13, 14.*

Phil. 3: 4 . . . If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: *5* circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, *6* as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless. *7* But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. *8* Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ *9* and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; *10* that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, *11* that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. *13* Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, *14* I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

s trail community after community
believing Christians; he wrote
tters that ran the gamut from pro-
ound theological treatises (Romans)
tenderly personal correspondence
Philemon).

What was "the power of his resur-
ction"? Was it not this: the grace
f God? Paul learned that no good
orks could save him, as Luther
arned that no frantic activity could
deem him. One had only to accept
od's forgiving grace, and he found
conciliation with his Father. Im-
elled by this revolutionary doctrine,
aul did the amazing things that he
id. This was the power that now
verwhelmed his life.

Yet, even in this, Paul confessed
hat he had more to know, more to
ttain. From the bleak walls of his
rison he looked beyond the life
hat is to the life that is to be, where
t last resurrection power would flow
nlimited by sin, by space, by time.

The Fellowship of His Sufferings

Paul shared abundantly in the
uffering of Christ. He describes in
I Cor., ch. 11, some of the things
e endured for the gospel. But these
vere not incidental hazards, the con-
equence of coming up against a few
eople who happened to dislike what
Paul was saying and doing. The
tartling and sobering fact is that
Paul considered suffering to be part
f the normal, everyday routine of

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you understand what it meant to Paul and what it should mean to us "to know Christ"?
2. What is "the power of his resurrection"?
3. How should Christians suffer today?

the Christian life! He as much as said that you are not a Christian if you do not pay dearly for your faith.

This is strange doctrine to American Christians. We like to think that Christianity relieves us of anxiety and pain rather than that Christianity may promote these things. And since we see so little evidence in our own churches of anyone's suffering very seriously for his faith, we quickly and with relief conclude that Paul had a unique experience which, fortunately, God does not ask us to share.

It should be one of your main purposes in the class period to discuss this matter. Let it be enough now to suggest some aspects of suffering that the Christian Church ought to consider part of its ministry among men today.

There is, of course, the out-and-out opposition to tyranny which has been most splendidly demonstrated in our day by the Christians in Korea and China. But as the Church must be the watchdog against tyranny and totalitarianism in American life, it will suffer for its testimony.

There is the suffering we ought to endure in order to provide from our resources for the needs of underprivileged people the world over. Giving is not really Christian until we feel the pinch of it and deprive ourselves of much-wanted things in its behalf.

There is the suffering that comes because we are faithful to the truth of the gospel, despite our natural resistance to it. By nature people do not really want the gospel of Jesus Christ. So the proclaiming of it and the living of it are often an extremely discouraging business. One who does not suffer in his soul because he instinctively rebels against God is a calloused and hardened man. We must avoid self-righteousness in this matter, but God takes care of this by reminding us what rebels *we* are!

None of this suffering compares with Christ's suffering. Yet somehow we must learn to suffer with him, that we may reign with him. Only he who has borne his cross can be victor over it; he alone can really experience the joy of resurrection morning who has, in life, endured the abyss of hell.

Lesson 11 — ADVICE TO A YOUNG WORKMAN

(Timothy, a Dependable Follower)

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. . . . Thou, O man of God . . . follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. . . . Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. . . . Neglect not the gift that is in thee. . . . Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. . . Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." *(II Tim. 1: 7; I Tim. 6: 11, 12; 4: 12, 14; II Tim. 4: 2; 2: 15.)*

Paul's words to one of God's most promising workmen are our clue to modern discipleship. They can stir us out of our complacency or half-hearted acquiescence. For we too, despite our many churches and comparative prosperity, live in difficult times and remain a minority in a perplexed world. Do we "fight the good fight" in the spirit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ? Do we dare to uphold his teachings, even as Paul and Timothy did? Are we capable of wise, earnest leadership when we find an opportunity to be good workmen for God?

On Standing Alone

Anyone who will change the world, either for his own ends or in the name of some great cause, is bound to be a lonely figure at times. Particularly is this true of Christian evangelists. The material goods of this world, the approbation of their fellow men, and their own comfort must mean little to them if they hope to make their voices heard among the people who are in greatest need.

Arnold J. Toynbee, the famous historian, writes: "This conversion of the first generation of Christians from the way of violence to the way of gentleness had to be purchased at

the price of a shattering blow to their material hopes."[1]

From the earliest days of the Christian Church, the followers of Jesus who have been leaders, teachers, and itinerant preachers have had to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit almost exclusively. For example, the author of the valuable advice to Timothy, which we are studying together this week, was not a prosperous or a popular man. He was old, "in bonds" (*II Tim. 1:8; 2:9*), abandoned by friends (*chs. 1:15; 4:10, 14-16*), depending on inner spiritual resources for strength (*ch. 4:17, 18*), and longing for affection and comfort from the people he had taught and shepherded over the years. These letters written by Paul to Timothy were among his last as he languished in prison in Rome.

Thus, a strong leader, one who was not afraid under any circumstances, was doing what he could to help those who would succeed him. And Timothy, assigned to the work at Ephesus and very much in need of encouragement, was one of his chief concerns. So, in spite of enforced absence and cruel imprisonment, Paul wrote words of encouragement to one less experienced than himself. Continually identifying himself with the work he had begun, the elder apostle succeeded in instilling some of his unquenchable spirit in a somewhat timid younger brother. (See *I Cor. 16:10, 11.*) The advice he gave was timely, detailed, and inspired. More than that, it has become timeless, as pertinent for us today as it was for the early Christians.

Timothy's Problem

Let us present, first of all, the situation that confronted Timothy. In spite of the careful training he had had from his grandmother Lois; from Eunice, his mother; from Paul, his teacher; and from Jesus, his inspiration, Timothy had more difficulties than he could handle at Ephesus. Confused or erring converts, self-righteous gossips, false teachers, insufficient lay leadership, squabbling women, members subject to temptations of all kinds, to say nothing of increasing demands on the charity budget, and limited resources—no wonder he felt inadequate.

Anyone who works actively in his own church today knows that the same elements of frustration and discord are often present. How can a young disciple cope with them? How can he acquire enough confidence and leadership ability to meet them? Can prayer alone help him? Should he admit past mistakes? Should he begin all over again? And where, how should he begin?

A Seven-Point Program

There is always a wide margin of difference between the ideal church and the actual situation that prevails in most parishes. Timothy himself was doubtless apologetic as he described the conditions at Ephesus to his mentor, Paul. For had not his guide and teacher borne much tribulation in the past? Was not the thorny road one of the prime conditions of discipleship? "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (*II Tim. 3:12.*) Timothy realized that he could not expect to avoid hardships. In a sense, the more he applied himself as a Christian, the more he would have to bear. Still, the eager young disciple wanted help from Paul's rich experience.

He was not disappointed. The older apostle encouraged him with sound counsel that took the form of the following seven-point program for his ministry.

1. *Faith.* Witness begins in faith,

[1] From *A Study in History*. Oxford University Press.

The Scripture Lesson for March 16

Scripture: *Acts 16:1-3; I Cor. 4:14-21; Phil. 2:19-24; I Tim. 4:10-16; II Tim. 2:1-13*

The Printed Text: *Phil. 2:19-24; II Tim. 2:1-13*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."—*I Tim. 4:12.*

Phil. 2:19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. *20* I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. *21* They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. *22* But Timothy's worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. *23* I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me; *24* and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself shall come also.

* * * * *

II Tim. 2:1 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, *2* and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. *3* Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. *4* No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him. *5* An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. *6* It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. *7* Think over what I say, for the Lord will grant you understanding in everything.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel, *9* the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters, like a criminal. But the word of God is not fettered. *10* Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which in Christ Jesus goes with eternal glory.

11 The saying is sure:

If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;
12 if we endure, we shall also reign, with him;
if we deny him, he also will deny us;
13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—
for he cannot deny himself.

n belief, in trust. It is an overflowng of gratitude to God for the onderful gift of his Son. Remember . Do not be ashamed to testify to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner" *ch. 1: 8*). Proclaim the gospel. Conentrate on the Scriptures, the octrines of the Church, and the lessings of God all around you. enter your life in Christ. Let your aith show in all you do and say nd think. Count it your most precious possession, and the sharing f it a high privilege.

2. *Prayer.* Keep on searching for deeper knowledge of God through meditation and prayer. Make prayer he source of your strength. As long s you dwell in prayer, you cannot go astray. Through prayer in Christ Jesus' name, all things are possible. But let prayer not be for yourself lone but for all men. (*I Tim. 2: 1-7.*)

3. *Purity.* Righteousness, sobriety, clean living, and true humility tell the world what you are. A vessel of grace must be a pure vessel. A man literally has to *"purge himself"* of all uncleanness and wrong desires if he would be "meet for the master's use." (*II Tim. 2: 21.*) These high standards also mean that the Christian leader must bear peevish remarks patiently, and even maintain silence under querulous questioning (by those who would find fault). Paul insists, however, that man is not bound under a legal code and ought not to give himself credit for various minor sacrifices. His aim is to live in godliness and Christlike dignity, and never to be a stumbling block to others.

4. *Love.* Mentioned again and again in the letters to Timothy (*I Tim. 4: 12; 6: 11; II Tim. 1: 7*) is the great secret of the Christian life—love. This means knowing the people to whom we witness, and being understanding and sympathetic toward all, even as Jesus was. It means giving others the benefit of the doubt, being generous in thought as well as in word and action, being aware of social issues and ready to *do* something about them, and being observant, receptive, and hospitable, even under adversity. Paul expressed this basic policy throughout his ministry and in many eloquent passages from his letters.

5. *Sound judgment.* Conscientious, hard work is essential in the life of discipleship. (*II Tim. 2: 15.*) Careful attention to detail and a diplomatic manner have a part in all sound leadership and not least in Christian leadership. The positive teaching of the Bible must be applied in practical life. Difficult problems must be ironed out without causing the kind of friction that leads nowhere. There are times when opposition is wholesome and salutary, but in other circumstances criticism would only sound like nagging pettiness. The man of God must, under the guidance of prayer and sound reasoning, choose a good time to act.

6. *Long-suffering.* Success is not guaranteed, except in the world to come. (*II Tim. 4: 7, 8.*) So often we are overwhelmed by Christ's example when we ought to be reassured. If no one can endure what he endured, in like measure no one can attain the perfection that he attained. For who can "lose his life" so utterly? Patience, meekness (*I Tim. 6: 11*), and the endurance of afflictions (*II Tim. 1:8; 4: 5*) are part and parcel of the Christian life. They were Paul's, they were Timothy's; they belong to active Christians today.

7. *Courage.* The most encouraging part of Paul's message to Timothy was probably his insistence on boldness and assurance, for Timothy had found out from experience that silent example or mild suggestion did not work in every case. He was "stepped on" by local officials and influential persons in the community who were somehow not made sufficiently aware of the fiery conviction that had motivated the young pastor. Paul urged him, therefore, to develop that side of his character and to look for opportunities to declare the Word of God without flinching.

We are safe in assuming that today, in our feverish, anxiety-ridden civilization, many people have lost the *quality* of leadership that Paul exemplified and upheld.

Paul's advice to the young workman, therefore, is advice for each of us to take to heart as we try to be a faithful church in our day.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is it that the people who would change the world must usually stand alone in their battles? What gives Christian pioneers the power to sustain this loneliness?

2. Apply the "seven-point program" that Paul gave to Timothy to the life of your own church.

3. In your particular church, do organizational matters stand in the way of a member's encounter with the Word of God?

Lesson 6— "Who Then Is Saved?"

(Continued from page 54)

The second thing to be noticed in this connection is that the human will of itself cannot make man good or in any way secure. "None is good, save one, that is, God" (*v. 19*), explained Jesus to the ruler who failed to give credit to God in all things. We are under no delusion as to the fate of this young man, for he persisted in his self-assigned path and declined his God-appointed destiny. He did not find happiness, but hungered the rest of his days for the sort of peace that flowed so abundantly into the soul of Zacchaeus. To the rich young ruler, *self* was center. All that he did, all that he thought, all that he hoped and longed for, still centered about himself. Thus, having failed to rely on God, he was without assurance of any kind, literally "lost."

Contrast, on the other hand, Zacchaeus' joy as he prepares to receive Jesus in his home. (*Ch. 19: 6.*) Here we have, eloquently proclaimed, what is *possible with God:* first, to see things in their right proportion; then, to give God the glory; and, finally, to live up to what Christ expected of us when he gave his life. Here a humble publican is our example. To Zacchaeus, God was henceforth to be the center of his life. The temptations of this world were to be put away, immediately, wholeheartedly, irrevocably, gladly. And Zacchaeus knew, without even asking, what Christ would have him do. If Christ's way was to be merciful to poor men and sinners, then that would be his way too.

By giving to the poor, Zacchaeus severed his ties with his old life. By being merciful to other sinners like himself, he opened his soul to God. And as he considered all that Jesus suffered on earth, Zacchaeus was sure that the way of love was the road to eternal life.

Lesson 12 — LYDIA AND THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI

(Lydia, Who Opened Heart and Home)

When a woman of mature years, supporting herself in a successful business, suddenly changes her religion, that's news. What does she need religion for? Or what's wrong with the conventional, safe, undemanding religion she has always known? Yet here is Lydia, seller of purple dyes, a Gentile woman, worshiping with Jews by a riverside. What was wrong with her Greek religion? Wasn't it good enough for her? Or, if she didn't like it, why, of all things did she take up with the Jews, a minority sect in the city?

The consequences of Lydia's queer act only confirmed her Gentile friends in their conviction that getting too excited about religion was a dangerous thing to do. For while worshiping with these Jews, she had heard an itinerant preacher named Paul tell about Jesus Christ, the Messiah; and to their consternation she was baptized and became—of all things—a Christian!

The sophisticated Gentiles probably lost track of Lydia after a while. But that did not matter to her. She was perfectly happy in her new-found faith. Her home became the place of worship for Christians of Philippi, and her whole household—family and domestic help—joined with her in the worship of Jesus Christ. Luke was probably her pastor, and together they built the congregation that meant so much to Paul in later years.

She Knew Her Need

The first thing to note about Lydia is that she was realistic about the state of her own spiritual life. She could admit that she had

> "enough, yet not too much
> To long for more:
> A yearning for a deeper peace
> Not known before."

This frank facing of the fact that all was not well within prompted her to visit the Jews and become a worshiper of their God. Judaism was then the only widespread religion professing one God instead of many. For Lydia to be a "worshiper of God" meant to give up the fashionable Greek religions of her friends, the cults of the Apollonians, the Dionysians, the Mithraists, and so on. It meant, too, that she could not profess the faith of the great majority of citizens in Philippi upon whom she depended for the prosperity of her business. They worshiped the Roman Empire. Today we would call their religion nationalism, and we are familiar with those of our own communities who seem to esteem no power more highly than the state. "Of course, I believe that every man has a right to his own religion," trumpeted a customer in the barber chair during a discussion of the Jehovah's Witnesses' convention, "except when a man's religion comes in conflict with allegiance to his country's flag." Lydia could not delight in the worship of many gods or in nationalism or, for that matter, in any of the free-and-easy religions popular among her countrymen.

For Lydia one religion was obviously not so good as another. Is one as good as another today? Religion is not necessarily good at all. There are insipid and downright destructive religions as well as stimulating and creative ones. What are some of the religions that compete with Christianity in America today? A few years ago *Life* magazine, with enough seriousness to give us pause, spoke of "the cult of the love goddess in America." In the past, said the writer of the article, love goddesses have never been accorded chief places in the pantheons of man because of their instability. "It has remained for Americans of the hard-boiled 20th century to enthrone Aphrodite as the supreme deity of their popular religion, to portray her rather dubious machinations as the most exalting and satisfying of human experiences and to subscribe with unquestioning faith to her incessant litany that sex is the most important thing in the world." The most popular embodiment of the love goddess in America at the moment is a representative movie actress, we are informed. "In her cinematically transfigured form" she is the deity of millions. The magazine does not fail to point up some of the serious social consequences of this paganism: the preoccupation with glamour, the corruption of the meaning of love, the distortion of courtship and marriage.

Then modern man has other religions: nationalism in the forms of Fascism, Sovietism, uncritical Americanism, the propagation of which lead inevitably to strife and bloodshed; the religion of pleasure, what Lewis Mumford describes as the acceptance of life "as an alternation of meaningless routine with insignificant sensation"; the religion of profit; the religion of prestige in the community. How many more? Far from having too little religion in our day we have too many religions that bring trouble and turmoil into life. The sooner we recognize these for the idolatries that they are, "profitable for nothing," as Isaiah declared long ago, the sooner we shall find ourselves in Lydia's uncomfortable but enviable position—aware that we have put our trust in false gods and goddesses, desirous of finding the living God. "Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need," said Jesus, "for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them!" (*Matt. 5: 3.*[1])

It is worth noting that Lydia was not dissatisfied because she was failing in her business. We have every reason to believe that she was in the position one person described himself as enjoying: "Instead of doing good," he observed, "I am doing well." Dealers in purple goods were usually prosperous. Very likely Lydia was the Philippian representative for one of the world-renowned dye firms in Thyatira, her home city. Aristocrats, priests, military and government officials, demanded the expensive purples that she imported. She had made an enviable adjustment as far as the outside world was concerned. Yet she was bothered by fundamental questions of mind and heart. What is the use of all this effort? What is the point of this getting and spending?

She Tried to Satisfy Her Need

Lydia did something about her spiritual dissatisfaction. Instead of trying to escape it by working longer

[1] From *The Complete Bible: An American Translation*, edited by J. M. Powis Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed. Published, 1939. Printed by permission of The University of Chicago Press.

ours at the office or cultivating some sthetic pastime, she turned about nd faced it. Seeking help, she joined ne local Jewish congregation. Judaism was the highest religion she new. Then, while attending a Sabath service, she heard Paul and ound Christ. Truly, "if any man's ill is to *do* his will, he shall now . . ." (*John 7: 17,* R.S.V.)

It is said of Horace Bushnell that is college days at Yale found him nable to believe in anything more racing than what he called the Abtract Principle of Right; he knew midst all of his uncertainties that e ought to do right when he saw it, ome what may. That was not much f a god from the Christian standoint, but it was all he knew, and he ollowed its lead. At night he knelt efore the Abstract Principle of ight and prayed for strength. Those ere dreary prayers, he confessed ong afterward, but they were honest nd the best that he could do. Later, hen he went back to teach at Yale, Horace Bushnell told his students hat God had come to him through he worship of that fraction of a god hat he maintained as an undergraduate. When, like Lydia, anyone akes seriously the deepest intuitions hat have come to him and seeks to ive by them, he is allowing God to ead him into the light. And God does.

Lydia is an illustration of the rewards that come to the person who dares to rethink religion in middle life. We may assume that she was mature in years because she was the ead of her house, probably a widow with a family, and apparently well established in the business world. But Lydia had not ceased to examine er convictions or question the quality of her spiritual life. Indeed, the second half of life involved for her a radical religious orientation.

C. G. Jung, one of the eminent psychiatrists of our time, declares hat the fundamental problem of every one of his patients over the age of thirty-five is the inability or he refusal to delve more deeply than outh allowed into the true meaning of his own existence. They look backward and try pathetically to compete with the young. "But we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the program of life's morning," he warns soberly. This was Lydia's experience. She exemplifies both the need and the capacity of those no longer young to change in fundamental ways.

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the "religions" that compete with Christianity today for men's allegiance. Is sex stressed as greatly as the quotation from *Life* magazine indicates it is? Is nationalism more dangerous in times of crisis, such as we are now experiencing, than in times of peace? What do we mean by "uncritical Americanism"?

2. Why is it hard for adults in their middle years to rethink their religious loyalties? Why may it be somewhat easier?

3. Why is it that adult converts to a particular faith are often more zealous in its behalf than people who have grown up in it?

Immediate Fruits of Her Faith

Lydia's response to Christ was typical of the mature convert: she began to witness in some very concrete ways. One thinks of people like C. S. Lewis, in our own day, who discovered Christ for the first time when they were already successful adults. These Christians commonly outstrip lifelong members of the Church in their zeal and effectiveness. Luke tells us that Lydia "was baptized, with her household" (*Acts 16: 15,* R.S.V.). Although it was customary in those days for families to change religions when the head of the house did, we need not conclude that they were changed by custom alone. The contagion of Lydia's new-found faith may have won them. In her daily work she so lived her faith that those who knew her best were won to believe as she did.

One of the most effective disciples of Christ in a later day than Lydia won disciples in the same way. He was Brother Lawrence, a kitchen worker in a Carmelite monastery. "The time of business does not with

The Scripture Lesson for March 23

Scripture: *Acts 16: 6-40*

The Printed Text: *Acts 16: 6-15, 40*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "A woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised."—*Prov. 31: 30* (A.S.V.).

Acts 16: 6 And they went through the region of Phryg'i-a and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. *7* And when they had come opposite My'si-a, they attempted to go into Bi-thyn'i-a, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; *8* so, passing by My'si-a, they went down to Tro'as. *9* And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Mac-e-do'ni-a was standing beseeching him and saying, "Come over to Mac-e-do'ni-a and help us." *10* And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Mac-e-do'ni-a, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Tro'as, we made a direct voyage to Sam'o-thrace, and the following day to Ne-ap'o-lis, *12* and from there to Philippi, which is the leading city of the district of Mac-e-do'ni-a, and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days; *13* and on the sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. *14* One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thy-a-ti'ra, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul. *15* And when she was baptized, with her household, she besought us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. . . .

40 So they went out of the prison, and visited Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they exhorted them and departed.

me differ from the time of prayer," he is reported to have said; "and in the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament." A good many modern kitchens could afford to be permeated by that spirit.

But Lydia not only won her family. She also turned her home into a church. She said to Paul and his companions, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay" (*v. 15*, R.S.V.). Her hospitality became the standard of the Early Church. To be sure, hospitality was one of the cultivated arts of the ancient world. Christianity encouraged it, enjoined it as a virtue. "Practice hospitality," wrote Paul, some years after this experience. "Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another" (*ch. 4: 9*, R.S.V.), wrote the author of I Peter still later. Lydia's reception freed Paul from the time-consuming task of earning board and room and enabled him to devote full time to the ministry in Philippi. It also provided a meeting place for converts, thus becoming the first church in that city. *Acts 16: 40* tells us that before Paul, Silas, and Timothy left Philippi, they saw "the brethren" at Lydia's.

Probably no more fruitful question could be asked, when we consider Lydia, than one about the Christian character of our own homes. Is Christ exalted in the way we open our homes and the kind of entertainment we offer our friends? Is Christ the Lord of family discipline? of family finances? How do our expenditures look in the light of our Christian profession? Most of what constitutes a Christian home is intangible, of course. But Lydia reminds us that the progress of the Church Universal is deeply influenced by the development of the Church—the Christian fellowship—in our homes.

Lesson 13—HOW A MAN WROTE A GOSPEL

(Luke, Physician and Historian)

Did you ever wonder how men came to write the books that comprise our New Testament? Have you ever tried to imagine what the authors had in mind as they undertook their literary efforts? There is a story behind every book in the Bible—the story of its origin. In some cases the books themselves reveal their genesis. In most cases this can be determined only by painstaking analysis of the texts in their historical settings.

Two of the books in the New Testament that tell plainly why and how they were written are The Gospel According to Luke and the book of The Acts. They are the work of one writer; their author prefaced them with two passages that have been selected as part of the assigned Scripture for today: *Luke 1: 1-4* and *Acts 1: 1, 2*.

The author of Luke-Acts (they belong together) was Luke. His twin works amount in volume to one fourth of the entire New Testament. How did he ever come to write these beautiful and stirring pieces? Where did he get his materials? How did he regard the finished product? These are questions which Luke himself makes it possible for us to answer with a fair degree of certainty. In this lesson our aim will be to gain a richer appreciation of God's Word through the study of one of his literary craftsmen. Knowledge of the way Luke went about his task of writing Scripture may instruct us in our own approach to it.

Meet the Author

What we know about Luke the man is restricted to three passages in Paul's letters and to logical inferences from Luke's own works. When writing to the Colossian church from prison, Paul affectionately mentioned "Luke the beloved physician," who was with him and wished to be remembered to it. (*Col. 4: 14.*) Two other letters mention Luke's presence with Paul—*II Tim. 4: 11* and *Philemon 24*. The passage in Philemon is phrased in such a way as to suggest that several of Paul's friends took turns sharing his imprisonment and ministering to his needs, one of these being Luke.

In his own writings Luke is retiring. But it is possible to gain some information about him, especially from The Acts; for there are sections in The Acts that are put down in the first person. Up to the sixteenth chapter of this book, Luke writes in the third person (except for his preface, *Luke 1: 1-4*, and the first sentence in *The Acts*). Suddenly, as he comes to the point in his narrative where Paul arrives at Troas, he switches "persons" and writes, "When he [Paul] had seen the vision, immediately *we* sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called *us* to preach the gospel to them" (*ch. 16: 10*, R.S.V.). No explanation is offered for this change. This "we-section," as it is called, extends a short way (*vs. 10-17*), and after that, for four chapters, the narrative continues in the customary third person. Then another "we-section" occurs (*ch 20: 5-15*) and another (*ch. 21: 1-18*). Near the end of the book there is a fourth "we-section" (*chs. 27: 1 to 28: 16*). From these passages we infer that Luke joined Paul at Troas, on the verge of the apostle's momentous crossing from Asia to Europe, that he traveled and worked with Paul in the mission to the Gentiles, and that he went with Paul back to Palestine and ultimately to Rome.

The Reason for His Work

Why did Luke write? His preface to Luke-Acts tells us. (*Luke 1: 1-4.*) The purpose was to let Theophilus (who may have been a Roman official interested in Christianity) "know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed" (*v. 4*, R.S.V.). Luke's reader had already been introduced to Christian history by other teachers. In the early days of the Church the teaching was not doctrinal but historical; converts were instructed in the words and deeds of Jesus. But no comprehensive account of Christ's life on earth and of the achievements of the Spirit since Christ's ascension existed for Theophilus. Although "many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us" (*v. 1*, R.S.V.), he writes, all these efforts taken together lack the completeness and the accuracy that are to be desired for

Questions for Discussion

1. Since there were records of Jesus' life already, why did Luke need to write a Gospel and The Acts?

2. Why is it important to study the Bible? Can we know God's will without the Bible?

3. How does Luke's approach to his sources suggest the way we should approach the Bible, which is our source?

4. What are some of the aspects of Bible study that should be pursued if we determine to study it with the thoroughness and care of Luke?

ıith's sake. Therefore, I am com-ıosing "an orderly account," having ıvestigated "all things closely for ɔme time past" (*v. 3,* R.S.V.). ;uke wished Theophilus to have all ıe facts. A historical faith required ıowledge of the history in which ıat faith arose. That is true for all me.

At a particular place and a specific ime in history, God drew aside the eil that hides him from human sight. he event in which this momentous ning took place is the coming of esus Christ, a man who healed the ick in Galilee and cast out the ıoney-changers in the Temple at erusalem, who was betrayed, spat ıpon, and gibbeted with thieves. The relation to this historical event s itself the very heart and essence of the Christian faith," declares Emil Brunner. "The Christian faith is faith n that which actually took place in esus Christ, or it is nothing at all. This faith may be foolishly uneduated or objectionable—but still that s what it is."[1] Since it is the Bible nd it alone that bears witness to this vent in time, the study of the Scripture is imperative for us.

Luke's Approach to the Event

Luke's approach to the study of Christian history is fully as instructive as his emphasis upon its importance. Again, we find in his preface the method he employed in his research. It was the method of *thorough investigation;* he "traced the course of all things" (*Luke 1: 3,* A.S.V.). What did this mean in Luke's day, the second generation after Christ, when there was no New Testament as such to examine? It meant the examination of the "many" accounts of which he speaks. Luke's predecessors had not been idle; they had produced written works, probably very brief, that Luke had at hand. We have every reason to believe that the Gospel of Mark was one of these earlier accounts, for three fifths of Mark can be found in Luke's Gospel. There was available to him, also, a collection of the sayings of Jesus. It must have been quite similar to one that Matthew used, because there are some two hundred verses in Luke's Gospel that match, exactly or in thought, verses in Matthew. Then, since there is a great deal of material in Luke's first volume, his Gospel, that does not appear in Mark or Matthew, he had other sources to study. From these sources he derived the parables of Jesus that no other Gospel records: the parable of the Lost Coin, the parable of the Prodigal Son, and others.

In his preface, Luke declares that these written works which were evidently before him were based upon the memories of "those who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word" (*ch. 1: 2,* R.S.V.). The "word" refers to the facts about Christ's earthly ministry. And if we consider this verse as introductory to the author's second volume—the book of The Acts—the "word" would refer also to the facts about the early history of the Church. Luke accompanied Paul to Palestine (*Acts 21: 15*) and, approximately two years later, left with Paul

[1] From *Revelation and Reason,* by Emil Brunner; translated by Olive Wyon. The Westminster Press. Copyright, 1946, by W. L. Jenkins.

The Scripture Lesson for March 30

Scripture: *Luke 1: 1-4; Acts 1: 1, 2; 16: 6-10; 27: 27; 28: 1-10; Col. 4: 14; II Tim. 4: 11*

The Printed Text: *Luke 1: 1-4; Acts 1: 1, 2; 16: 6-10*

(Revised Standard Version)

The Golden Text: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." —*Acts 1: 8.*

Luke 1: 1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative
of the things which have been accomplished among us, *2* just as they
were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses
and ministers of the word, *3* it seemed good to me also, having followed
all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for
you, most excellent The-oph'i-lus, *4* that you may know the truth con-
cerning the things of which you have been informed.

* * * * *

Acts 1: 1 In the first book, O The-oph'i-lus, I have dealt with all
that Jesus began to do and teach, *2* until the day when he was taken up,
after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apos-
tles whom he had chosen.

* * * * *

Ch. 16: 6 And they went through the region of Phryg'i-a and Galatia,
having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.
7 And when they had come opposite My'si-a, they attempted to go into
Bi-thyn'i-a, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; *8* so, passing by
My'si-a, they went down to Tro'as. *9* And a vision appeared to Paul in
the night: a man of Mac-e-do'ni-a was standing beseeching him and
saying, "Come over to Mac-e-do'ni-a and help us." *10* And when he
had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Mac-e-do'ni-a,
concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

for Rome (*ch. 27:1*). Two years would have been ample time to consult with those who had known Jesus in the days of his flesh and had participated in the stirring events that led to the expansion of the Christian Church into the Gentile world.

It has already been noted that Luke was able to draw upon another invaluable source: his own personal experience. He had traveled extensively with Paul. With his own eyes he had seen Christian history made. The "we-sections" of The Acts reflect this fact, being most probably parts of a diary that Luke kept en route.

The great number of materials that Luke obtained required compiling. This explains his emphasis on *accuracy*. I have "traced the course of all things *accurately*" (*Luke 1:3*, A.S.V.), he writes to Theophilus. It was imperative that he check one source against another and evaluate within each report what was important, what unimportant, for his reader and others. Evidently Luke did not agree at every point with all the materials before him; probably he could not. He had to decide what he would include in his straightforward history; it would not be a mere amassing of the data he had collected. We can see something of what accuracy meant to Luke when we analyze his use of the Gospel of Mark, for, in the main, Luke follows the order of events in Jesus' life as Mark records them. Yet oftentimes Luke does not hesitate to abridge Mark's material, rearrange it, and put it down in different words. (See, for example, *Luke 9:7-9* in comparison with *Mark 6:14-29*.)

Thus we see in Luke's approach to his sources no slavish conformity. Rather, his method was one of discriminating inquiry. His purpose was the discovery of truth about Christ and his Church, and precisely because this was what he was after, he investigated every record and report, thoroughly, testing the accuracy of each.

How We Study the Word

This is the approach we try to take as Christians who know that our growth in Christ depends in part upon increased knowledge and understanding of him in his historic appearing. We are misled when we follow anyone who advocates the abandonment of our critical faculties in the study of Scripture. If Christians in the first century had followed that advice, we would have no New Testament, no record at all of what Christ did and said, no knowledge of what men by his Spirit achieved in the world. For the writings of the New Testament arose out of the determination of men like Luke to take up the sources at their disposal and examine them in the bright light of their background. Our sources are the books of the Old and the New Testaments. For over one hundred years scholars have been investigating these works in the light of their historic background. Each one of the books of the Bible bears its own witness to experiences that men have had with God. As Emil Brunner puts it, the books of the Bible are "human testimonies given by God, under the Spirit's guidance, of the Word of God; they have a share in the absolute authority of the Word, yet they are not the Word, but means through which the Word is given."[1] Thus we see that the more we can learn about the historic conditions under which the books of the Bible were written, the more adequately we shall be able to understand God's will to which each witnesses. Luke's purpose and method point the way to a faith that is based on facts—the facts without which faith is neither sure nor Christian.

* * * * *

Note: In addition to this lesson article, you will want to read "Who Wrote Luke and John?" by W. Douglas Chamberlain. It is on page 7 of this magazine.

Latin America Seeks a Faith

(Continued from page 5)

insisted on accompanying him to his hotel at one A.M. They said, "We have no religion, but we would like to hear about yours." They returned the next morning to finish the conversation at breakfast time.

In a sense, that is the voice of intelligent young Latin America—"We have no religion, but we would like to hear about yours."

Evangelicals are a minority, yes—between three and four millions in a population of nearly 150 millions. Some are coming into prominence in the political, business, and professional life of their countries, and exercising a wide influence. The governor of a state in Brazil, when he was appointing a special commission of fifteen men, announced that he was going to name an Evangelical as treasurer, for he needed a man of absolute integrity. A congressman in Brazil invariably quotes from the Bible when he makes a speech. "These are the things I learned in an Evangelical school when I was a boy," he says; "there they taught me how to live."

The main emphasis of the Evangelical churches is on evangelism—how to bring more people into this glorious, new, life-giving experience of Christ. The churches are growing everywhere, and leadership is developing. But their resources are still very meager. They will need the help of the Christian churches in the United States for a long time to come; money for new projects and for church buildings, hospitals, and schools; missionaries with special skills and sympathetic understanding; and scholarships for able young people who will serve the Christian community. Above all else, they want to feel part of the great fellowship of the redeemed, who live, work, and pray for the coming of Christ's Kingdom. Many of these brethren have suffered for their faith; they are persecuted just because they worship God according to their conscience.

The Church of Jesus Christ, however, has come to Latin America to stay. The living Christ is entering the hearts of the Latin-American people.

Who Wrote Luke and John?

(Continued from page 8)

a strategic withdrawal from his advanced position. Close scrutiny has made it clear that Ignatius (first and early second centuries) knew and used this Gospel. This fact was conceded grudgingly for a time. It was fashionable to say that Ignatius did not use the Gospel of John, but a body of teaching that was like the Gospel.

About thirty years ago, a papyrus fragment of this Gospel was discovered in Egypt, which the best authorities dated not later than A.D. 125. This indicates clearly that it was in circulation one thousand miles from Ephesus, its place of origin, within forty years after the

ditional date of its writing. Since matius knew the Gospel, it could t have been written after he used and since the author of John new Luke's Gospel, he must have itten after Luke wrote. This would ace the extreme limits between o. 85 and 115, with the most robable date somewhere between 90 nd 100.

The Situation Addressed

The Christian community at phesus was beset by a resurgence paganism. As the Jewish Chris- ans had attempted to take over hristianity, shaping it by Jewish tterns of thought, so some Greeks ied to fit Christianity into their ngan preconceptions. The Christian essage had to defend itself against oth these tendencies. Paul fought he former battle in Galatians; the ospel of John and The First pistle of John fought the second. chaos of loose, fantastic ideas nreatened the faith of the Church. t became necessary to make a clear istinction between the Christian rotherhood and the world, in both s beliefs and its morals.

The Author of This Gospel

Books of several hundreds of pages ave been written on this subject. certainly cannot handle it in a aragraph. Most New Testament cholars attribute this Gospel to a ohn the Elder, a younger friend nd admirer of the apostle John, the on of Zebedee. In my judgment, this ohn the Elder, as a distinct person rom the apostle, is a rather nebu- ous figure. His chief claim to xistence is that two tombs of a John sed to be pointed out in Ephesus. When one recalls the tendency of radition to multiply holy places, one annot be very greatly impressed hat there should be two tombs of ohn.

It is clear that the author thought n Aramaic, although he wrote in Greek; that he was an eye-witness to he crucifixion (*ch. 19: 35*); and that e knew the topography of Jerusalem nd Palestine intimately. In other vords, he was a Palestinian Jew. I lo not know of anyone who meets hese qualifications better than John, he son of Zebedee. The last word has ot been said on this subject; it nust be investigated further, and per- aps new evidence will be found to hrow more light on the question.

YOUR SCRIPTURE STUDY FOR THE WEEK

(Home Daily Bible Readings)

1. Called for Witnessing

Dec. 31—*Isa. 60: 19-22*
Jan. 1—*John 1: 1-13*
Jan. 2—*Matt. 2: 1-11*
Jan. 3—*John 1: 24-34*
Jan. 4—*John 1: 35-42*
Jan. 5—*John 1: 43-45*
Jan. 6—*John 1: 45-51*

2. Christ's Fisherman

Jan. 7—*Matt. 4: 12-17*
Jan. 8—*Luke 4: 6, 16-22*
Jan. 9—*Mark 1: 16-20*
Jan. 10—*Mark 1: 29, 35-39*
Jan. 11—*Luke 10: 1-9*
Jan. 12—*John 12: 20-26*
Jan. 13—*Acts 1: 6-14*

3. The Joy of the Bridegroom's Friends

Jan. 14—*Luke 6: 32-37*
Jan. 15—*Luke 15: 3-7*
Jan. 16—*Mark 2: 13-17*
Jan. 17—*Mark 3: 13-19*
Jan. 18—*Matt. 6: 22-24*
Jan. 19—*Luke 6: 43-45*
Jan. 20—*Matt. 25: 31-46*

4. Seeker for Truth

Jan. 21—*Luke 21: 12-17*
Jan. 22—*John 3: 1-3, 16-21*
Jan. 23—*Luke 12: 4-9*
Jan. 24—*Luke 14: 25-33*
Jan. 25—*Matt. 5: 13-16*
Jan. 26—*John 12: 34-43*
Jan. 27—*John 19: 38-42*

5. The Woman Who Loved Much

Jan. 28—*Ps. 63*
Jan. 29—*Eph. 2: 1-10*
Jan. 30—*Ps. 119: 9-16*
Jan. 31—*Matt. 15: 1-10*
Feb. 1—*Luke 15: 1-7*
Feb. 2—*Luke 15: 11-24*
Feb. 3—*Eph. 2: 11-22*

6. "Who Then Is Saved?"

Feb. 4—*Mark 10: 23-31*
Feb. 5—*Ps. 37: 1-11, 16*
Feb. 6—*Ps. 52*
Feb. 7—*Luke 8: 4-15*
Feb. 8—*I Tim. 6: 17-19; Matt. 19: 16-22*
Feb. 9—*Mark 12: 41-44*
Feb. 10—*Luke 12: 13-21*

7. Mary and Martha Believe

Feb. 11—*I John 2: 8-17*
Feb. 12—*Mark 3: 31-35*
Feb. 13—*Luke 10: 38-42*
Feb. 14—*John 11: 1-6*
Feb. 15—*John 11: 7-16*
Feb. 16—*John 11: 17-35*
Feb. 17—*John 12: 1-8*

8. Three Privileged Friends

Feb. 18—*Luke 5: 1-11*
Feb. 19—*Matt. 16: 13-20*
Feb. 20—*Matt. 20: 20-28*
Feb. 21—*Mark 14: 17-21, 26-31*
Feb. 22—*Mark 14: 43-50*
Feb. 23—*Acts 4: 5-20*
Feb. 24—*Acts 12: 1-5*

9. "Son of Encouragement"

Feb. 25—*Acts 4: 32-37*
Feb. 26—*Acts 9: 26-30*
Feb. 27—*Acts 11: 19-24*
Feb. 28—*Acts 11: 25-30*
Feb. 29—*Acts 13: 1-12*
March 1—*Acts 15: 22-41*
March 2—*Ps. 1*

10. Paul, a Man in Christ

March 3—*Acts 26: 1-11*
March 4—*Acts 26: 12-22*
March 5—*I Cor. 9: 16-23*
March 6—*Rom. 1: 13-17*
March 7—*Gal. 3: 23-28*
March 8—*Col. 3: 1-11*
March 9—*Phil. 3: 4b-17*

11. Advice to a Young Workman

March 10—*Acts 16: 1-5*
March 11—*I Cor., ch. 4.*
March 12—*I Tim. 1: 18 to 2: 8*
March 13—*I Tim., ch. 4*
March 14—*I Tim. 6: 11-16*
March 15—*II Tim. 2: 1-15*
March 16—*II Tim. 4: 1-8*

12. Lydia and the Church at Philippi

March 17—*Luke 23: 55 to 24: 11*
March 18—*John 20: 11-18*
March 19—*Acts 16: 6-12*
March 20—*Acts 16: 12-15*
March 21—*Acts 17: 1-4*
March 22—*II Tim. 1: 1-14*
March 23—*Prov. 31: 10-31*

13. How a Man Wrote a Gospel

March 24—*Luke 1: 1-4*
March 25—*Luke 1: 57, 58, 67-80*
March 26—*Luke 14: 1-11*
March 27—*Luke 10: 25-37*
March 28—*Acts 1: 1-5*
March 29—*Col. 4: 7-18*
March 30—*Acts 28: 1-16*

BOOKS
for Christian Study

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

By John Bunyan

This guide has been prepared by Wilbur Frank Dierking.

EDITOR'S NOTE on editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress:* We have examined ten different editions of this classic in order to recommend one to the groups using this course. It has been difficult, however, to find one edition that can be recommended above all others. We have considered the various factors of price, attractive appearance, and readable print, and on that basis we recommend any one of the following:

The best is the edition published by Thomas Nelson & Sons and illustrated by Byam Shaw. It sells for $2.50. The type is large and clear, and the drawings, though old-fashioned, are colorful and interpretive.

The only objection to the Peter Pauper Press edition is that it consists of Part One only. Our study this quarter deals with just that part of the story, but anyone purchasing *The Pilgrim's Progress* will probably want the whole book. This is an extremely artistic and attractive edition, however. The type face and format are beautiful and in characteristic Peter Pauper style. The price is $2.00.

Robert Lawson, well-known illustrator, has drawn many amusing and personable sketches for a picture-book edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress,* published by J. B. Lippincott Company in 1939. The thing to consider here is that the story as given in this edition was shortened and retold for modern readers by Mary Godolphin (1884), and you must decide whether or not that is the copy of the book you want. It is a good job of retelling and may appeal to readers who find Bunyan himself formidable. The price is $2.50.

It has been impossible to recommend any edition under $2.00 because the print is either too small or not clear. The John C. Winston Company has an edition that sells for $1.50, with large print and some illustrations, but the paper is of poor quality.

So you don't like *Pilgrim's Progress?* You wonder why this classic of other years has been brought out of mothballs? You would put it on a shelf labeled "the most boring of all"? Don't you think it fair for me to ask, "Have you ever really read the story of Christian?" Perhaps you have always intended to get around to reading it. Be honest now; you really don't know much about it, do you? But if you will begin with an open mind, you may have a surprise in store for yourself.

This is a book for adults, so come on! Buy a copy, open the book, and begin reading. Take with you in your reading a lively imagination. You have been brought up on many picture magazines, where all you have to do is to turn the pages and look. Not so with John Bunyan, for his work is allegorical. Make sure you know what this means—it is important—then bring all your fancy to bear, dig in and read, and make up your own mental pictures as you go. It will be fun. You are about to meet Mr. Facing-both-ways, Simple, Sloth, Presumption, Patience, Ignorance, Hopeful, Obstinate, Pliable, and the famous pilgrim—Christian.

The Pilgrim's Progress is a prison book, and it endeavors to take us from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. This is a pilgrimage, and one that we all must journey. Perhaps a close scrutiny of the pitfalls and dangers about which it tells will help you to gain the Celestial City.

Bunyan opens Christian's journey with one of the most famous lines in all literature: "As I walked through the wilderness of this world, . . . I dreamed a dream." In his dream Christian's conscience bothers him, and he awakens out of his sleep to cry, "What shall I do?" This question becomes his famous "burden," and it is to rid himself of this burden that Christian now directs his life's efforts.

A favorite criticism at this early point in Bunyan's classic is Christian's individualism. The critic points out that Christian leaves his home, his wife and children, and goes on his way. Therefore, he is selfish. But there are certain quests, certain pilgrimages, that all of us can and must take only alone, and the search for a life direction is one of these individual quests. Furthermore, remember the date of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (it was first published in 1678) —a time of highly individualistic thinking in the Church.

Christian, as an individual, is now started on his long journey to the Celestial City. As he leaves his house, neighbors Obstinate and Pliable see him. Neighbors are usually seeing the

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ings we do. These two attempt to ring him back, but are unsuccessful. liable is won over to the side of hristian and follows him until they ll into the Slough of Despond. Pli- ble finds this too much for his faith, r he had set out hoping for streets ved with gold. Climbing out the earest way, he runs home. How do e meet "Pliable" in our Christian xperience?

But the defection of Pliable does ot hinder Christian, for on he plods, e burden on his back, until he eets with Mr. Worldly-Wiseman. n reading this story, some of my unior high church school young peo- le saw in this character the modern, ick type of salesman. At any rate, his character is the successful type, nd his philosophy is ingrained deeper han we like to think in the Church's fe. He has all the answers, knows ow to raise money; yes, Mr. Wordly- Viseman has all the answers but the hristian one.

The House of the Interpreter

Stumbling along his pilgrim way, Christian comes to the house of the nterpreter. This is one of the great cenes. Christian knocks, and the loor is opened into the house of the nterpreter. After he enters, the In- erpreter begins showing him the hings that will be profitable to him. Christian sees on the wall a print of grave man with eyes lifted to eaven, the best of books in His and, the law of truth written upon His lips, and the world behind His ack.

With our eyes lifted to heaven, ve experience humility before God. With the best of books our minds be- ome open. (A boycott on all digests and picture magazines for a year or two would work wonders with our reading habits!) With the world behind us, we can move on toward the city not made with hands.

There follows a scene in the house of the Interpreter in which much dust is raised. Calling for a maid, the Interpreter asks her to sprinkle water in the room to allay the dust. Christian asks, "What means this?" The Interpreter replies: "This parlor is the heart of a man that was never sanctified by the sweet grace of the gospel: the dust is original sin, and inward corruptions that have defiled the whole man."

You don't like this? It may be hard doctrine, but it is surely true to the Scriptures and to our Confession of Faith!

Many will put the book down here, never to pick it up again. To those of you who are still willing, go on to Passion and Patience. What counterpart has Passion today? Perhaps all of us fit in here, wanting all the good things now. Bunyan paints in words a beautiful picture of Patience as one who can wait in Christian humility for some of the good things to come. Well, you figure out who is running amuck these days, Passion or Patience.

All this time the burden on the back of Christian has become heavier. Upon seeing the cross, he is surprised to find that his burden is eased. In fact, it falls off his back and rolls away. Old theology, you say. Could be. But consider for yourself how the burden of sin is actually your greatest burden and how the cross takes it from you.

On and on goes Christian until he comes to the Palace Beautiful, where Prudence puts a question that is one for all to ponder: "Can you remember by what means you find your annoyances at times, as if they were vanquished?" Christian answers, "Yes, when I think what I saw at the cross, that will do it; . . . also when I look into the roll that I carry in my bosom, that will do it; and when my thoughts wax warm about whither I am going, that will do it."

Then into the Valley of Humiliation goes Christian. In this valley he must fight for his life with Apollyon. This will be a bloody battle, but from it will come vast experience in the Christian way of life.

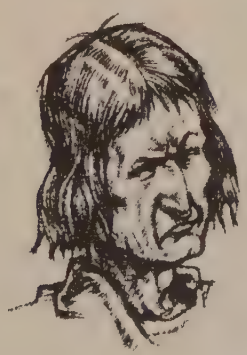
Talkative comes along to greet Christian, and one sees in him a modern type of churchman. Bunyan remarks of Talkative, "He talketh of prayer, of repentance, of faith, and of the new birth; but he knows but only to *talk* of them."

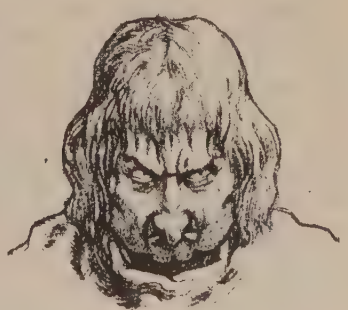
Vanity Fair

Along the pilgrim journey is a town called Vanity, and in it is held a fair called Vanity Fair. Read this portion very carefully, for it is a picture of our day as well as of Bunyan's. Study the clothes of the pilgrims and their attitudes in regard to things to be bought. The merchants grow exasperated in their indifference to the things they have to sell and finally say, "What will ye buy?" Christian and Faithful respond, "We buy the truth." Buying the truth cost Faithful his life. But has the price changed today? Have we as Christians within the church always sought the truth, or have we tried to be diplomatic? Go over this scene carefully, for our business world is not unlike Vanity Fair.

"He is a rogue," said Mr. Liar.

"A low wretch!" said Mr. High-mind.





"I long to crush him," said Mr. Enmity.

"I hate the mere look of him," said Mr. Malice.

The ability of John Bunyan to draw such accurate characters is the mark of his genius. Take the character Giant Despair, of Doubting Castle. The conversations in this scene are applicable today. In Doubting Castle, where not only Christian is confused but also some of us today, Christian finally realizes that all the time the answer to his doubts is within. He says, "I have a key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle." He finds this to be true, and, emerging from Doubting Castle, he soon finds himself out on the King's highway.

Again, there is the character Ignorance, who came not in by the Wicket-Gate. At last, at the gate of the Celestial City, he is found out and is separated from the other pilgrims. A hard picture, you say; after all, "God is love" and tender mercy. This is true, but there is also justice in the Scriptures. Have we forgotten? The price for lies is severe, and Holy Writ is still on the side of truth and honesty.

John Bunyan talks of death, and he closes the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* with one of his best scenes. Some parents object to this, even as they try to hide the realities of life from their children. Some children have grown into adults without knowing what hideous things there are in life. God made all things good and beautiful, but in the Person of Jesus Christ he did not turn his eyes from the leper or fail to help him.

Coming to the river that separates Christian from the Celestial City, he steps into the water. He sinks again and again before he calls for help. His companion, who hears his cries, calls back with one of the great lines of Bunyan's pen. He says: "Be of good cheer, my brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good."

Finally, we end our pilgrimage with Christian. Through all the ups and downs, he overcomes with faith.

Read and reread the story, until it becomes a part of your very make-up, and you will be amazed at the strength that comes to you.

THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WOOLMAN

Edited by Janet Whitney

(Henry Regnery Company; 1950, $2.75)

THE first edition of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* was printed in 1678, in England; almost a hundred years later (1774), in Philadelphia, a printer struck off the first edition of *The Journal of John Woolman.* One teaches a profound lesson by means of allegory; the other is equally convincing and convicting by means of personal reflections and autobiography. One was written by a Baptist preacher in Bedford jail; the other was composed by a Quaker minister in outward tranquillity but inward wrestling in a comfortable farmhouse in Mount Holly, New Jersey. One is widely known as a world classic that everyone should read; the other is scarcely known (except among Quakers), and no one has a guilty conscience because he has not read it.

But Woolman's *Journal* ought to be known, and it ought to be read. It is the intimate record of how a man, placing himself entirely at the disposal of God, is led to influence his society in no uncertain way. John Woolman was one of the strongest forces in colonial America for the abolition of the slave trade. That particular issue is not a live one today; but there are other issues, equally urgent, on which men need divine initiative to make them act. Woolman's service to our day lies in his demonstration of how a sensitive spirit receives his commission and compulsion and then does what he is directed by God to do.

The *Journal,* however, is not a pious tract, boring in its platitudes or tiresome in its phrases. By living with great literature, Woolman himself became an engaging stylist, and the reader is soon enjoying the leisurely language of early America before it became the land of the news magazine and the digest. The book is not tedious, but neither is it the kind that must be read at one sitting. In fact, it is better tasted, read a section at a time, then put aside to allow for reflection and meditation.

The *Journal* has had several editors and has gone through various editions. The latest and best is prepared by Janet Whitney and is based on some newly discovered manuscripts of parts of the *Journal* that turned up in 1941. Mrs. Whitney is also John Woolman's biographer; her book *John Woolman, American Quaker* was published in 1942. It is now out of print, but it is probably in many public libraries.

A short but very helpful introduction to Woolman and his writings is given us by Douglas V. Steere, in his book *Doors Into Life,* through five devotional classics (1948). Chapter 3 is devoted to the *Journal.*

In the group discussion of this book (suggestions for which are made in *Westminster Teacher*), many points in addition to those given below are brought out.

Understanding Woolman's Life

Woolman does not write very much about his daily activities or any outside events going on during his lifetime (1720-1772). This was the century of George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and John Wesley; yet they are not part of the *Journal.* It is the pulsating period when the colonies had the birthpangs of independence; yet none of this is recorded in its pages. Was Woolman therefore a mystic, living in tranquil isolation from society? On the contrary, his *Journal* shows an active, traveled man who never let business or home obligations stand in the way of following a divine call to go to Carolina, to New England, or just around New Jersey, to counsel with Quakers about their part in the slave traffic. He was a single-minded person, intent on showing how God led him in his vocation; anything not related to this purpose had no place in his *Journal.* Even his domestic life is subordinated to this single theme, his marriage being merely mentioned (p. 25). This does not mean he was unhappy in his home. Mrs. Whitney proves conclusively that the contrary was true. Sarah, his

fe, was a devoted helper who ac-pted unquestioningly whatever the pirit led her husband to do. (See *urnal,* pp. 96, 120.)

Woolman was engaged in a pastoral inistry. He was recognized by his onthly Meeting as a person with ecial gifts, and so he was made a inister after the Quaker fashion. ee Mrs. Whitney's introduction to e *Journal,* p. ix.) But he pursued s vocation more through private nversations than through public ad-resses (though he was no mean eaker). "Of the thirty-eight times his life on which John Woolman plied to his meeting for a minute" that is, written permission to go rth in behalf of his "concern"—wenty-four were for visiting of milies."[1] To see how he conducted mself in private conversations, note ese pages in the *Journal:* 16, 33 d 34, 35, 49, 50, 60, 74, and hers. It is instructive also to notice w reticent he was about speaking blicly. He wanted to be sure he as really led by the Spirit to speak; r examples of this, see pp. 11, 55, , 91.

The Growth of His Concern

In the course of his life of fifty-wo years Woolman had several over-owering concerns. The greatest was is desire to eliminate the practice f slavery. To this we shall devote ost of our attention here. First, owever, it would organize our own hinking about this book if we listed for ourselves some of the other evils that Woolman condemned. (These will be discussed more extensively in your reading group if your leader follows the suggestions in *Westminster Teacher.*) To make your list, note Woolman's reflections on these pages: 12, 36, 74, 112-114, 124, 172, 180, 189, 190.

Now consider how this concern about slavery developed. There was, first of all, long nurture in the Quaker meeting—the discipline, as a youngster, of sitting in silence and learning to listen for the Spirit's voice. Then there were "the pious instructions of parents" and the family reading of Holy Scriptures. During adolescence he indulged in "youthful vanities" that turned his heart from God; but his sensitive conscience was stirred, and near the age of eighteen "I felt the judgments of God in my soul, like a consuming fire. . . . I learned to bear the cross, and felt refreshment to come from the presence of the Lord. . . . I learned that if I would live in the life which the faithful servants of God lived in I must not go into company in my own will, but all the cravings of sense must be governed by a superior principle" (pp. 6, 7; see further pp. 8, 9).

His personal faith was now expressed publicly (p. 11), and he began to feel the weight of a call to a special ministry. Then his master passion—to eliminate the slave traffic—began to lay hold on him. (Pp. 13, 14.) On his first religious journeys the concern deepened. (P. 20.) Soon after his return from the visit to the Carolinas, he wrote out the reasons for his concern about slavery and showed the paper to his father on his deathbed. (P. 26.) Now his concern conflicted with his business interests (p. 27), but the concern prevailed. In 1753 or 1754 he published the manuscript he had shown his father eight years earlier: "Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes."

His second trip to the South found him refusing to accept free hospitality gained at the expense of the Negro slaves; note how difficult it was for him to follow this leading (pp. 44-46). Note next, on pp. 47, 48, Woolman's reasons for objecting to slavery: the effect of the practice on the slaveowners, the lack of incentive on the part of the slaves who have no "inducement to be industrious," the birthright of all men to liberty, the fact that their "souls are as precious as ours" (see p. 48), and the economic liability they were fast becoming. Note also what he said to the slaveowners on p. 50.

An important element in following a concern is expressed on p. 61. The effect of the activity is not the primary matter: the Friend must always consider the motive of his concern. Has he proceeded from a sincere sense of divine compulsion, or has he secretly sought personal prominence, notoriety, or fame for his efforts? Woolman frequently had to ask himself this question. (See pp. 91, 92.)

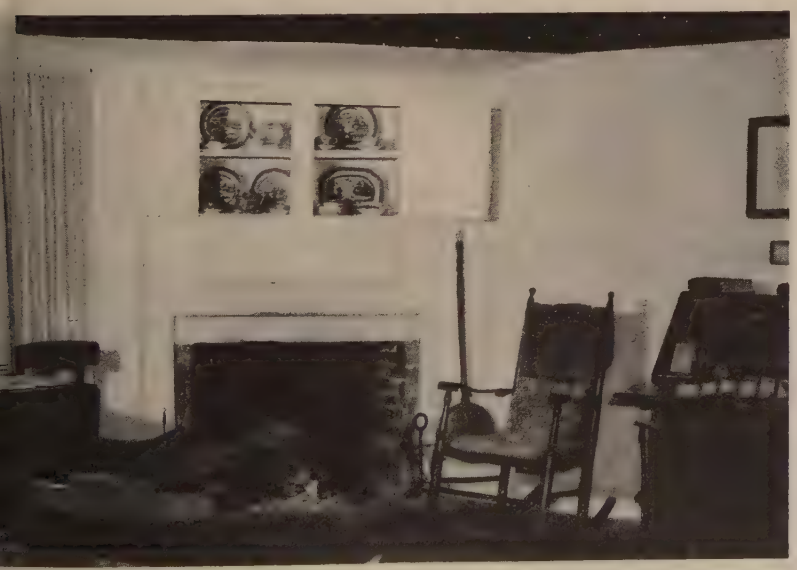
The concern required more of Woolman than he ever realized it would. He was led to wear undyed clothing the last years of his life because the dyes came from the labor of slaves. (Pp. 113-117.) He gave up using condiments at meals since these too came from slave labor. He almost went to the West Indies to compensate for what he considered unjust profits from a transaction involving slaves early in his career. At the last his voyage to England, where he died, was motivated by this great concern.

It is significant also to realize that Woolman never imposed his concern or its effects on others. He did not expect that his fellow Friends or even his wife and daughter would be subject to the same denials that he had to follow.

Summarizing the growth of this concern, then, we may note: (1) It was born out of a sense of doing God's will thoroughly. (2) It was

(Continued on page 90)

[1] From *John Woolman, American Quaker,* y Janet Whitney.



INTERIOR OF JOHN WOOLMAN HOME, MOUNT HOLLY, NEW JERSEY

Books in Review

Living the Creed, by Carroll E. Simcox. (Morehouse-Gorham Co. 182 pages. $2.75.)

Living the Creed attempts to take modern man inside the Apostles' Creed in quest of the personal faith that lies behind the outer wall of dogma. Dr. Simcox succeeds in this venture when he writes appealingly of "person to person" belief in God the Father, when, holding a high view of Christ, he insists that belief *in* him as a living contemporary is quite different from belief *about* him in "archeological mood"; when, as his central insight, he shows that the love which is at work in God, in Christ, in the working of the Holy Spirit, in the Church, and in eternal life, is divine love and not love conceived of sentimentally or in purely human terms. The author fails in his purpose when he tries to protect such ideas as Christ's divine conception, the Virgin birth, the descent into hell, the ascension, the bodily resurrection, the Second Coming, the communion of saints, against "time's ravage" by mere polishing of the outside rather than by deep grooving to the central core of truth within each of these concepts.—*William M. Ferry.*

Road Without Turning: The Story of Rev. James H. Robinson. An Autobiography. (Farrar, Straus and Company. 312 pages. $3.00.)

The "road" began in the Bottoms, a small cluster of outcast people and rickety shacks along Cripple Creek at the edge of Knoxville, Tennessee; it has led to the pulpit of the Church of the Master (Presbyterian) in New York City. The man who has traveled the road is Rev. James H. Robinson, a Presbyterian minister. This is the story of his life as a Negro in America.

After you begin the book you will not want to put it down, but you may wish you could. Mr. Robinson has described with utter honesty the struggle of a Negro against the bitter hatred and crushing injustice of white America. What is more remarkable, he has described with equal honesty the struggle within himself to maintain some kind of equilibrium, to keep fighting without hating the white world, his country, and himself. In a prefacing note the publisher has described the book well as "a courageous and deeply revealing document in which the problems of his own race, of our own country, and of our times are clearly revealed. Great humility is here, and enormous strength shines through the admission of weakness. This is a book of self-searching and of the search for God. It is the story of a Negro and the story of universal man as well." —*Nevin E. Kendell.*

Teach Us to Pray, by Charles Francis Whiston. (The Pilgrim Press. 243 pages. $2.50.)

Teach Us to Pray will make you so ashamed of your own prayer life that you will want to do something constructive about it. The entire book is fresh; it captures the mind and heart of the reader and makes him want to learn more of the secrets and mysteries of prayer.

This book is offered to the clergy, laymen, and even those outside organized Christianity. It deals specifically with the nature and power of Christian prayer. To give it substance and balance, the author indicates that prayer must be accompanied by right theology as well as by proper techniques. It "treats of the life of praying, and not just simply of acts of prayer." It awakens us to the realization that much of our praying is selfish and not distinctively Christian.

Here is not just theory but a book written by a man of God who is deep in the things of the Spirit. He knows from experience the foundations of Christian prayer, of man's deep spiritual needs, and of man's subtle resistances to God. Not for a long time have I read anything that has done more for my own personal prayer life.—*Laurence L. Hucksoll.*

The Whole World Singing, edited by Edith Lovell Thomas. (Friendship Press. 127 pages. Cloth, $2.75; paper, $1.50.)

These "songs of praise and work and joy from many lands" have been assembled in a beautiful volume whose value for home, school, and church will remain for years to come. This is an international songbook, published at a period when the world, with its rapid shrinking, is throwing together peoples who do not yet understand or love one another. To have for children and family use a collection of songs from thirty-eight countries is to take one more step in the right direction.

The rich pages of this treasure yield old English rounds and African camp songs, ballads from Samoa and hymns from the German, the rolling chantey of the Yangtze boatmen and prayer lyrics from the Hindustani. Here are songs of morning, hymns to God, songs about nature, ballads of friendship, psalms, and country airs.

The basic conviction underlying this work is altogether valid: music is a universal language that passes through boundaries and brings nations together.

This book of songs becomes a companion piece to an earlier Friendship Press book, *Children's Games from Many Lands,* compiled by Nina Millen. They make a splendid set for use in home recreation and family group singing.—*John Charles Wynn.*

Program Guide FOR ADULT GROUPS

Will Rogers used to say, "All I know is just what I read in the papers." But how reliable is your daily paper or the news magazine that comes into your home? The professor of philosophy at Denison University (Ohio) asks—

Have We a *Dependable* Press?

By Harold H. Titus

How does the newspaper you read influence your thinking? Do you ever consider what point of view you are absorbing from what you read? These are some of the questions this article will raise in your mind.

INTO my home come two daily newspapers, several weekly news magazines and news services, and some monthly journals. Yet when an important issue is before the country, I am often perplexed by my inability to find out what has actually happened. I am called upon to express my opinion, to talk to my classes, and sometimes to give talks on current topics when I am unable to secure what I consider a fair and impartial coverage of the essential elements in the situation.

My feeling of uncertainty is not an isolated one, judging by the present flood of books and articles on the American press. A study[1] of the handling of the "Condon Case" by nine New York newspapers is somewhat typical. A subcommittee of the House Committee on Un-American Activities called Dr. Edward U. Condon "one of the weakest links in our atomic security." Immediately various governmental agencies and individuals made statements in his defense. The New York papers studied varied widely in their treatment of the case. Most of the pro-Condon statements were found in four papers—the *Times, Herald Tribune, Star,* and *Post.* In the *Journal-American* 82 per cent of the statements printed were anti-Condon. In the *Sun, Mirror,* and *News* the anti-Condon statements were preponderant. The newspapers tended to repeat denunciations "six times as often as they repeated statements in his support."

Need for a Reader's Code of Ethics

Today's reader needs an ethical code or a set of values for judging newspapers and his own methods of keeping informed. The Christian seeks to live at his best in the affairs of everyday life. This concern grows out of his loyalty to Christ and to the God that Christ revealed. Right choice in any situation depends upon the Christian's knowledge of the actual situation as well as upon his good intentions. As Shakespeare says, "Honor alone doth not make a good surgeon." The mature Christian will feel a moral obligation to be significantly informed about the world in which he lives. He will want to

This article, entitled "Ethics for the Newspaper Reader," appeared in *Social Action,* a publication of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and is reprinted here by permission. The January 15, 1951, issue of this same publication carries an interesting article on "Foreign Policy and Public Opinion," written by a group of journalists and research students at Yale University.

[1] "Trial by Newspaper," by Joseph T. Klapper and Charles Y. Glock. *Scientific American,* February, 1949.

investigate the nature of the sources of his information about what takes place in society.

The opinions, attitudes, and conduct of most of us depend to a considerable degree upon the "facts" that are available and upon the images impressed upon us for interpretation of the facts. This is why the press and other media of mass communication are so important. Our time is limited, and we soon weary. We read what is easily available and processed for quick reader consumption. A majority of us, of necessity, must gain our impressions of the world and form our attitudes toward persons and events secondhand —through the eyes and ears of other observers. We gain these impressions from newspaper accounts and newscasts based on such accounts.

Christian View of Man and Our Reading Habits

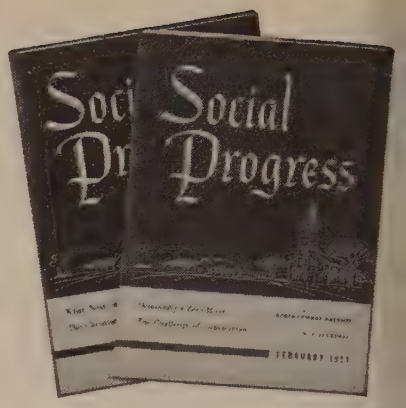
The Christian religion gives us deep insights into the nature of man. Although man is a creature of great worth, he is also sinful and likely to err. For the Christian, no individual, and no group or class in society, has the absolute truth. Since this is the case, he cannot rely upon one source for information. Moreover, he feels his faith requires him to know the interests and outlook of the owners of the sources of our news, for men tend to use their powers and their position to advance their own interests.

Men who own and control our newspapers are as honest as their readers, and most of them make a sincere attempt to be impartial. The statement, frequently heard, that we have the "best newspapers in the world" is probably true. However, most newspaper publishers . . . represent a class and a point of view, and they tend to gather about them others of the same point of view or outlook. Many of these men regard the newspaper as an instrument for expressing their views, for gaining support for some political group, or for serving some profitable business enterprise in which they are also interested. The one-sidedness, the stereotyping of conventional attitudes, the exploitation of primitive drives, and the selection and slanting of news items as found in many newspapers unquestionably contribute to the social and moral confusion and backwardness of our society. For Christians the problem of power is always how to make that power responsible to the larger group and not merely to those who happen to wield the power at the time. The reader of newspapers who can recognize the danger that is present when publishing power is responsible to no one but the owners is a great aid to a democracy. . . .

Personal Experience Often Leads to Healthy Cynicism About News Coverage

The ordinary reader may recognize, in a general way, the necessity for exercising his critical judgment regarding the sources of his information; yet it usually takes some personal experience to make him sensitive to the problem. I attended a conference on "The Heritage of the English-Speaking Peoples and Their Responsibility" held at an American college. The program featured a forum discussion by Senator Robert A. Taft and Dr. Harold Laski, of the London School of Economics. Both men presented well-organized talks with divergent but carefully stated political philosophies. A stimulating discussion, with keen audience participation, followed. The press was well represented. During his talk Mr. Taft made a brief reference in criticism of the conduct of the war crimes trials at Nuremberg. In the discussion period someone asked a question regarding these trials so that the topic was brought up again. Both Mr. Taft and Mr. Laski made replies, Mr. Taft disapproving and Mr. Laski approving the trials. This whole session was handled by some newspapers as if Mr. Taft had made a speech on the Nuremberg trials. There was no mention of the title of his talk and the main points of his address. Mr. Laski was either simply mentioned as having spoken or given the silent treatment by not being mentioned at all.[2]

Considerable numbers of persons, especially those with limited experience and outlook, appear to accept at face value what they read in the papers. This is especially true if they have only one source for information and if they have no basis for criticizing the reports. In the case of the lecture by Mr. Taft the writer had a basis for criticism only because he was present and heard the discussion that was reported. In the main the reports were to be criticized not so much for what was said as for what was left out. In some cases the presentation of half the truth may be more insidious in its effects than the publication of the false, since the false may more easily be denied or refuted.



Social Progress, *a publication of the Division of Social Education and Action, Board of Christian Education, carries additional material on this subject in January, 1952.*

Influence of the Special Interest Press

On the whole the prestige and influence of the press in the United States seems to be declining. During recent elections the newspapers have been overwhelmingly on the losing side and have not represented public opinion. Persons are likely to be skeptical of the newspaper when its news items and editorials run counter to their class or professional interests, sympathies, and stereotypes. Businessmen are influenced strongly by their trade journals, laborers by the labor press, and farmers by the farm publications. Men tend to live in a business culture with business standards, in a labor culture with its distinctive point of view, or in a farm culture with agricultural interests setting the pattern of thought and action. Due to the fact that society has become increasingly broken up into specialized or self-interest groups, men more and more tend to think as occupational type men. They think in social stereotypes and in the narrow clichés of a vocation. Moral courage and intellectual and spiritual

[2] *The New York Times,* October 6, 1946, though featuring and emphasizing Mr. Taft's statements regarding the trials, did give some attention to other points in his talk, and also to the views of Mr. Laski.

esources are needed to overcome ese biases. Christian readers of ewspapers must seek to read and to nderstand more than what pleasantly grees with their peculiar stereo-pes.

tandards of Judgment of the Press

The Commission on Freedom of ne Press[8] presented certain require-ents or standards of judgment that an be used by the reader in evaluat-g mass communication media. To ae extent that these requirements re met we have a free and responsi-le press. They are conditions that re reader as the ultimate consumer ould demand from his general news-apers.

Truthful account of events in eaningful context. First, the ommission suggests that the news-aper should offer "a truthful, mprehensive, and intelligent ac-ount of the day's events in a context hich gives them meaning." Fact and pinion should be distinguished in so ar as possible. Since a bare state-ent of some facts may be mislead-ng, the reader has a right to know the truth about the fact." The single vent must be placed in its fair or roper setting.

To present events in their proper erspective is no easy task. Reporters nd correspondents, as well as editors nd owners of newspapers, usually ave some definite social viewpoints nd loyalties. These convictions are he "inarticulate major premises" hat easily color all reports. Wherever ossible, these premises, assumptions, nd value judgments should be made lear and specific. They should not be xcluded or suppressed, since readers ave a right to know when news-apers have a conscious policy of playing up" or "playing down" ertain items in the news.

Forum for exchange of com-ent. Secondly, the newspaper hould be "a forum for the exchange f comment and criticism." Papers hat refuse to publish significant ideas nd opinions contrary to those of the embers of its staff are betraying trust and are reprehensible. How any papers solicit the opinions of arious and conflicting groups, when hese are not sent in voluntarily, so hat all the main viewpoints on an ssue will be represented? Truth is discovered only when men have access to a wide range of facts and opinions. Furthermore, the sources of facts, opinions, and arguments ought to be identified so that readers can weigh and evaluate them.

Present full picture of important group in society. A third requirement is "the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society." In the past all too frequently the public has been fed stereotypes regarding the members of certain social, economic, racial, and national groups. *The New York Times* is to be commended for a new policy announced August 11, 1946. During that summer a number of papers had headlined on page one a crime committed by a Negro. *The New York Times* protested against extending Jim Crowism to the printed page. In view of the prejudice created in the past, the paper announced as its policy that "the race of a person suspected or accused of crimes shall not be published unless there is a legitimate purpose to be served thereby." Considering the difficulties under which the Negro labors, the *Times* decided, the term "Negro" will be mentioned only in the case of artists or others "whose achievements are a matter of pride to all of us." [Many other newspapers have followed the *Times* in this policy.]

The press has not been in the past a neutral or an impartial reporter in the social struggles in modern society. Many newspapers are active participants in the controversial issues of our time. In politics most of them are frankly partisan. In labor disputes, apart from the reporting of such things as strikes, there is usually no coverage of the ideology and social forces back of the labor movement. Groups in opposition to the owners of newspapers may be able to get notices of meetings printed but find it difficult to let the public know the things for which they stand. The great newspaper chains tend to serve the interests of the dominant groups in society.

Is it reasonable to suggest that a newspaper might periodically assign different pages or portions of the paper to different interest groups in the community or the nation? To read the opinions and arguments of different political parties and of business, labor, farm, and professional groups in the same paper might be exceedingly stimulating—for the groups and for the reader.

Clarify goals and values of society. A fourth requirement is "the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society." Newspapermen are occasionally heard to say that they give the public what it wants. In a very real sense, however, the papers cultivate or create the wants that they claim to serve. Newspapermen can help to perpetuate and strengthen the democratic way of life and the desire for world order, or they can help to undermine such ideas and ideals. Although our papers do need to stress democratic values, such as freedom and justice, it is well for them and for the reader to remember that these values vary in meaning for different groups. For example, the businessman is likely to stress the rights of free enterprise and freedom of contract; the laborer is likely to stress the right to work and to receive a living wage. Others may emphasize the right to security and to share in the cultural and spiritual heritage of the race.

Full and widespread access to the day's intelligence. Finally, the Commission on the Freedom of the Press requires of newspapers "full access to the day's intelligence." There must be a "wide distribution of news and opinion."

Action by the Reader

As readers of newspapers, as citizens, and as Christians interested in a better society, there are two things we can do at once. In the first place, we can exert pressure to improve our present newspapers. We can encourage, criticize, and protest as occasion demands. In the second place, we can widen our range or variety of reading. This may entail subscription to newspapers of varied policy, to some of the better weekly and monthly journals of opinion and news analysis, and to selected pressure and research group publications. . . . We shall have to assume, I think, that most newspapers do not meet the standards set forth by the Commission on Freedom of the Press. More of them will be encouraged to do so in the future if readers of papers become more responsible and intelligent.

As readers we might well encourage

(Continued on page 91)

[8] *A Free and Responsible Press*, The University of Chicago Press, 1947.

Mark, Martha, and Maryan Wynn
keep the Director of Christian Family Life of our Board of Christian Education
from being theoretical on this subject.

"Being a Father Is Quite a Bother"

By John Charles Wynn

WHOEVER glibly recites these days that worn-out adage about every man's being king in his own castle just isn't thinking about fathers! Brow-beaten by the cartoonists, and an easy butt for the radio comedians' jokes, the modern father is less often pictured as tyrant than as tyrannized. With Ogden Nash he would aver in obvious understatement:

> *"Being a father*
> *Is quite a bother."*[1]

But we wouldn't change it for anything! It's just that many of us are not quite certain how to go about this job of paternal responsibility.

"A Chip off the Old Block"

One disconcerting thing we soon learn about our son and heir is the sudden realization that he is imitating his father's ways and lines of thought. Try as we may, with all that we do for our children, they still grow up to be like their dads. The boys mimic their fathers, both consciously and unconsciously, and daughters develop their conception of men from what daddy is like. Someday their choice of a life partner is going to be influenced (probably without their realizing it) by the good and bad recollections of life with father. We think sometimes we don't influence the younger generation very much; actually, children land at just about the spot we parents have led them!

This frightening thought carries some inferences to ponder. Those chance bits of conversation overheard by our children—what impressions do they leave? Our prejudices and convictions—would we wish them all to be caught and copied in these little lives? This matter of Christian training—does it make any difference what Bible stories we tell them at bedtime if they see us living daily as if we had never opened the dust-covered Book?

"Since we became real pals I'm the only one you wake up nights"

One of the father's most essential jobs, you see, is just *being* a father. If he *never* speaks to his son as man to man, if he lets *all* the precious experiences of prayer with his children be delegated to his wife, if he neglects *entirely* to play croquet with the kids or to construct model airplanes with them, still he is a powerful teacher. For good or for ill, what he is often drowns out anything he tries to say.

Understanding Through Companionship

Not all solutions are complex. Just reserving time to be with one's children has accomplished much for unnumbered dads. Of course, it involves some sacrifice, giving up a Saturday afternoon golf game, skipping a lodge dinner, maybe foregoing some evening business and so making a bit less money. But it's worth it.

Story time becomes a great experience for dads and lads alike. Whether it be a story manufactured from the whole cloth, an adventure tale read from a book, or a reading from the child's church school curriculum, it means a treat for the

[1] From "Soliloquy in Circles," in *Family Reunion*, by Ogden Nash. Copyright, 1949, by Ogden Nash. Little, Brown & Company. 1951. Used by permission.

small fry. It also means an easy doorway is opened to character education.

Spending time together makes possible other experiences: games and contests that help teach sportsmanship and good-natured losing; working cheerfully side by side on household chores; or simply sitting quietly in the back yard for an earnest talk. It isn't the number of hours a father spends weekly with his kiddies that counts so much as it is what goes on in the time they are together.

Taking time with the small fry implies unplanned moments as well as the organized periods. It can involve laying aside the newspaper to answer a question, or seizing some golden instant for a vitally serious explanation because a question has opened the way. It can be as brief as a smile, or time taken out to enjoy a joke together. What is essential is that the experience indicates a father's love.

No Such Thing as a Bad Dad

Completely bad fathers are actually newsworthy items. Many pull off foolish blunders. Universally, they are known for losing their tempers when, fatigued by something at the office, they fly off the handle at equally tired and irritable children. With mistaken judgment, they sometimes play favorites among their sons or daughters. They may be grossly unwise in discipline. Yet, by and large, most fathers do try hard.

A big problem we fathers have is this matter of authority. We've got to avoid dictatorship, on the one side, and deference to the children on the other.

All children need to recognize authoritative control in their parents. A feeling of security and of confidence accrues from the recognition that even if a child wavers in decision between right and wrong, his dad can point it out. Sometimes, to our surprise, this elicits a grateful response from the little one who somehow couldn't stop being naughty but was checked by dad, or the teenager who would waver about his curfew time except for an insistence upon eleven o'clock from Pop. That father who supposes that to "be a buddy" means that he should avoid imposing his will when necessary has missed the point. For children actually look to their dads for protection and guidance, because dads are stronger and more experienced.

This is not to say, however, that dad can use his authority-as-father only through a vulgar display of power. The best kind of discipline is that which hurts the least. Although pain is an aid to learning, satisfaction is more potent. The sort of strictness that leaves a youngster hurt and humiliated can win the point, but it is an empty victory.

Discipline defeats its own purpose if it quells the youngster's ability to form his own decisions. Lest he go through life always looking to father for orders, it is better to train him to control himself, even at the cost of his making some mistakes of his own.

Recent research indicates a trend away from the traditional concept of father (the patriarch whose word is law and whose authority dare not be questioned) toward what the sociologists call the developmental concept. The latter takes into account the need for self-expression in the child, and the greater effectiveness of the father who explains and works things out with his children. This kind of man does not fear to admit when he is wrong, nor does he punish in order to cover up his own error. Instead, he loves his children enough to see them as persons in their own right, never to be treated as his personal possessions.

Even when it is necessary to discipline a child overtly and firmly, the wiser father makes it clear that his displeasure with wrong conduct does not lessen his love. An injury is done to the child who feels that he is no longer loved because he has been taken to task.

And this in its finite way is an insight into the ways in which God regards those created in his image. Loving us in spite of our sin, permitting us the option of choosing or rejecting his grace, he never violates us as persons. Rather he leads us, finds us again when we have strayed, and forgives us when we err.

In a Christian family it should not be difficult for the children to understand what Jesus meant when he taught his disciples to pray to "Our Father." They will have firsthand experience that will help them appreciate this profound insight.

A Program Based on This Article

- This topic will mean most to married couples clubs in which parents can get into honest discussion of the father's role, and to men's fellowships whose ranks will doubtless include both experienced and inexperienced dads.
- Such material could be presented (with plenty of local testimonials) in a father-children forum. A panel of several fathers and an equal number of frank young people could bring the subject to life!
- The meeting could also begin with a bull session on "Beautiful Boners." Let the fathers candidly recount some of their errors and humorous blunders. This can open the way to easy discussion and candid opinion.
- All right, suppose you have committed some real blunders—is the cause lost? How can you make it up to your kids? Where can you take hold to improve your paternal job?
- Discuss whether dad is acting correctly when he reserves his tools for himself and forbids his son to touch them. What are the effects of such a rule? How ought it to be handled?
- Dad says, "I'm spanking you because I love you," and his son replies, "I'd sure like to be big enough to return your love!" How many of our problems are handled on the basis of superior force? How would we approach such problems if we lacked this advantage?
- "Good fathers are good husbands," an old cliché asserts. Does this really hold water? What correlation is there between good father-children understanding and good marital understanding?
- What are some of the subtle influences that fathers exert upon the faith of their children?
- How can we train our small boys to prepare for Christian parenthood?
- The first three Gospels have more than forty references to words of Jesus that speak of God as Father. Offhand, how many such sayings can you recall? What implications have these?
- "Too many children see father less frequently than they see the milkman or postman," writes an author of a recent article. Is this statement overdrawn? Does our economic system work against good home relationships?

STEEPLES OVER AMERICA

By Constance M. Hallock

WHERE were you on the night of January 1, 1940? No, this is not the beginning of a detective story, nor a query on just how you spent New Year's Day that winter when World War II was really getting underway. It is a question of the roof over your head.

Perhaps it should read, "Are you living in the same quarters as in 1940?" If so, you are exceptional. Between 1940 and 1950, fully half the people of the United States shifted their residence, and since 1950 many more have moved. Some went only around the corner, some across the continent. People from the South went west and north. People from the North went west and south. Few moved east, although around the eastern industrial cities clustered fast-growing suburbs. These were made up of out-of-town people moving in for wartime jobs, and city people moving out as wartime incomes gave them a chance for better living conditions. GI's married, and their young wives followed them here and there. Airplane plants went up in Texas, factories in Nebraska, war-enlarged industries in Tennessee, and people moved to them. Schoolteachers took factory jobs, and city office workers helped to harvest apples. Everyone was on the move to somewhere else.

And then most of them stayed where they happened to alight. No one had expected that. Landlords had gloomily foreseen rentals dropping. Church workers in emergency positions had thought that their jobs would be wound up a month or two after the war ended. Patient—or impatient—old residents had looked forward to being able to get a seat in their own busses once again, as soon as the war workers went away.

But it didn't happen. The housing developments remained full, and the cry was raised for more accommodations. Three million new people stayed on the West Coast. In industrial cities the busses are still crowded. Children are being turned away from church schools in Baltimore, and in the State of Washington they meet in vestibules or behind the piano.

From churches like these, people have moved to the teeming cities and suburbs. Do they find a new church home?

They Brought New Problems

Where did they all come from, those unchurched millions, and why can't they build their churches themselves?

A fair share of them are the children of those wartime marriages. Some of them cut their teeth on Phi Beta Kappa keys on university campuses. Others squeezed in beside their young parents with in-laws who hardly had room for their own families. These children now are crowding into the early grades in both church and public schools.

Great numbers of Negroes have moved north to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Chicago. They have settled around Los Angeles and San Francisco. Bay suburbs that before the war had a few hundred Negro residents now have thousands. Elsewhere, whole areas once white have become Negro, and special housing communities now accommodate other thousands. From one such community near the Portsmouth (Virginia) Navy Yard, the Presbyterian chaplain writes, "thirty-seven thousand now, and more coming in," as ships of World War II are taken "out of mothballs" and reconditioned for use as needed. In general, the solution of the problem of overcrowding in central city areas is for those who can afford it to move out, while their former dwellings are taken over

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people who are starting in on a wer economic level.

For the church, this presents the roblem of how to provide facilities ithout the financial resources of ne group that is moving out. Some- mes the church building may be rned over directly to the new- omers. In other cases the change- ver may not be so clear-cut. ld-timers may remain while others ove in. In either case, it is almost ertain that some outside financial elp will be needed while adjust- ents are being made.

Although the most dramatic situa- ons are presented in the new com- unities where a new building and a hole new congregation appear at the me time, or in the fast-changing downtown" city area, the old pat- ern of church formation is still oing on—the pattern by which great umbers of Presbyterian churches ere originally formed. A Sunday chool is organized in some rural area r as a mission in a city district. It rows and develops. Soon it feels the eed for more than church school ork. A church is authorized by the resbytery, and another unit added o the roster of Presbyterian hurches. Here, too, some outside elp is often needed while the new roup gets on its feet.

Help Is Needed

The reasons why the churches, oth old and new, must have help (at least for a time) are varied. Con- truction companies save money by lanning and building on a large cale. Whole new communities are uilt at one time, but the houses are old one by one. No one knows whether the buyers will be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or of no religious connection at all. By the time the new residents have come to know one another well enough to plan for a church, there is no space left. So t is the responsibility of some re- gional group such as the presbytery to take an option on the necessary and, or buy it outright, before the community fills up. This takes money, and such organizations have only what the church gives them.

Zoning regulations must be con- sidered. These regulations often stipulate the minimum amount of money to be spent on a given type of building. In the usual postwar suburb or new housing development the average family is young, with a moderate income. The house must be paid for, the children sent to school. There is little spare money. A church group of 75 or 100 members in such circumstances would have a hard time providing the $60,000 needed for a building site and a first unit in Los Angeles, or the $35,000 for enlarging an old church in Harris- burg, Pa., where two new government housing projects are being put up. (Figures are from the Office of New Church Development and Building Aid, Board of National Missions.)

When the postwar situation first pressed strongly for solution, Presby- terian churches needing help turned to the Board of National Missions. This Board appeared to be the group with nation-wide contacts, best fitted to handle the needs. It was not long before the authenticated requests for Board help totaled five million dol- lars. At present those requests, or indications that aid will be needed from the Board, have been docu- mented in the amount of over $12,500,000 for new churches alone, and altogether for over $19,000,000 for new building and rehabilitation of existing buildings.

The General Assembly meeting in Cincinnati in 1950 recognized the problem and its urgency and made it clear that the situation was far beyond the power of one Board of the Church to meet. The whole Pres- byterian Church must take part if this need is to be met.

The Presbyterian Church is not alone in facing this situation. The Roman Catholic Church has a build- ing program of over ten billion dol- lars for the next five years. Protestant churches as a whole anticipate spend- ing about one billion dollars during the same period. These figures, of course, are subject to change as war demands may require.

Program Resources

Each denomination must face its own problems, but to give back- ground information for all—or at least for those of the 29 denomina- tions with about 150,000 congrega- tions in the National Council of Churches who may wish it—the theme of church extension was chosen as the general topic for mission study in the home field for 1951-1952. Books on this theme have been is- sued by the Friendship Press, which is the publishing branch of the Joint Commission on Missionary Educa- tion of the National Council of Churches. Dr. Truman Douglass, executive vice president of the Board of Home Missions of the Congrega- tional Christian Churches, popular writer, and man of wide experience in church administration, has pre- pared the book for adult readers, *Mission to America.* Study and dis- cussion groups throughout the country will be using this book on the home missions theme, "Churches for Our Country's Needs."

Whether or not your group wishes to undertake such a study, it may wish to spend one session in discus- sion of the problems outlined above. Some questions to stimulate dis- cussion might be:

"We have difficulty in keeping up our own church program: salaries, church school materials, building maintenance, choir, and all that. In these times of high prices, how can we be expected to do anything more?"

"Our neighborhood is one of those which are changing. The former white-collar and business people are moving out, and we have Orientals, Negroes, Mexicans, instead of old- stock white Americans. Should our church withdraw and build else- where? go on and gradually die out? reorganize as a mission of a more prosperous church? open our doors to the new community? If the latter, what shall our program be and how shall we finance it?"

"What about the church extension that is not being done—reaching the nearly 50 per cent of our population who according to the last census have no church connection at all? Among our own friends, are there any of that 50 per cent, and if so, what can we do about it?"

"Are there any specific projects in church extension in our own pres- bytery that we could learn about firsthand?"

The *Year Book of Prayer for Mis- sions,* in which are listed the names and something of the work of all Presbyterian missionaries, documents the church extension problem with valuable information. The following, mentioned in the 1951 edition, il- lustrate some of the situations where the enlargement or shifting of popu- lation is especially felt (many others might be mentioned. The reader will prefer to study the lists and make his own choice.):

(Continued on page 91)

THE MEANING OF *Epiphany and Lent*

By George Miles Gibson

In recent years the Protestant churches have been making more of the main seasons of the Christian year. Where the emphasis used to be on a few special days, such as Christmas and Easter, there is now a growing use of the seasons around the full calendar. Where the seasonal accent was formerly limited to the morning sermon, it is now worked into the group life of the church in many meaningful ways.

This article will offer brief explanations of the meaning of the seasons of Epiphany and Lent and suggest ways of observing them in adult groups. It is written by the professor of homiletics at McCormick Theological Seminary, who is also the author of a very helpful book, The Story of the Christian Year.

EPIPHANY means "manifestation." Its beginning is in the story of the Wise Men, and its date January 6. Through these Magi from the East, God made himself manifest to the whole world. Provincialism was broken down by the birth of the Baby Jesus. Through him, and through the Wise Men, God was offering his redemption to all mankind. His love knows no geographical limits; nor does his reign exclude any of the functional areas of life, such as art, science, education, wealth, politics. For all these God has guidance.

Epiphany extends beyond January 6 from two to six weeks, depending on the position of Easter in the particular year. It is a time of concentration on the world-wide mission and on the claim of Christ over every segment of our living.

The time is appropriate also for solid group study of our Presbyterian world mission. By making assignments well in advance, members of the group or guest speakers may bring in materials through which all may survey the whole program of the Church at home and abroad, together with its application to economics, world politics, health, and education. Maps will be helpful in locating the actual projects supported by our Church, and real stories from the field will acquaint the members with the motives, problems, and accomplishments of our work. This is a fine time for special study of the mission-study books designated for the year: *We Americans: North and South,* by George P. Howard; and *Mission to America,* by Truman Douglass. Each one costs $2.00, cloth; $1.25, paper.

CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE,
A WOOD CARVING BY ALOIS LANG

The Deeper Meaning of Lent

Lent was added to the Christian year as a period of preparation for Easter. At first including only Holy Week, it later was extended to the forty days before Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday, symbolizing the forty hours of Christ in the tomb. This season represents the highest spiritual experience of the whole year, progressing by intensive devotional search through the tremendous drama of Holy Week and on to the triumph of the resurrection.

The period is so full of symbolic and historic meaning that one group project could well be *a study of Lent* itself. The members could be assigned responsibilities for bringing in reports explaining in detail the customary meanings of its days and practices. Many of the customs are foreign to Protestant experience, and there is no point in trying to introduce into Protestantism practices that properly belong to another group. Yet countless helps to understanding and to a richer devotional life will be discovered in such a study.

But a mere curiosity about symbols and customs would miss the deeper opportunities of the season. The group may be led into an actual experience of spiritual enrichment and to a fuller knowledge of the bases of Christian faith.

For a study topic, *the life of Christ* is most appropriate. The six weeks may be so planned as to cover the main events and teachings of Jesus as set forth in the four Gospels, or in any one of them. Or a series of selected parables of Jesus, or of his miracles, or of the questions he asked, or the Sermon on the Mount, may be the basis for helpful devotional study.

A good book may be selected for group study and for family devotions in the home. Failure of private and

mily devotions is a matter of fre-ient comment. One reason for this ilure is that Christians are not in-ructed in how to pray or how to orship in the family circle. Definite ds are needed to overcome the em-rrassment. A good book is such an d. Experience shows that people will spond when specific helps are sug-sted. Thus, in private or family de-otions, the book may be read a apter at a time, with brief periods discussion, meditation, and prayer.

Christian classics may be used. ooks of such tremendous spiritual ower as *The Little Flowers of Fran-s of Assisi,* Thomas à Kempis' *Imi-tion of Christ,* and William Law's *erious Call* are available in inex-ensive editions and prove tremen-ously interesting for group discus-on. One group beginning in Lent ith Augustine's *Confessions* con-nued its interest in Christian classics round the year, covering several of ne notable books in Christian litera-ure under the direction of the pas-or. Lent opens a way to the use of Books for Christian Study" if you ave not used this feature. (See age 72.) The two books recom-ended for this quarter—*The Pil-rim's Progress* and *The Journal of ohn Woolman*—are particularly suit-ble for Lenten reading and study.

The book by William Law, men-oned above, has recently been re-ublished by The Westminster Press. aw was one of the great seventeenth nd eighteenth century mystics. His ook, the full title of which is *A erious Call to a Devout and Holy ife* ($2.50), is a practical work on ethods of the devotional life. Here he Christian learns the importance f regular discipline for spiritual rowth and a refutation of the idea opular in some circles that religious reedom means license. The author urther takes the reader step by step hrough the whole process of prayer. he style is that of a story rather han a lecture, and the fact that the ook has lasted more than three cen-uries proves its interest as well as its orth in giving the reader a usable ethod of prayer and in enabling him o discover its power.

Holy Week

Holy Week is the most intensive eriod of the whole Church year. he natural drama of the last great vents of the life of Christ on earth oves toward its climax. The Chris-tian is not just a spectator but an actual participant in this drama. Day by day the unforgettable scenes are re-enacted, all men sharing in them. Purely social events are inappropriate during Holy Week, when the thought of the group will be centered in the experiences of Christ as he moves through the Passion toward the resurrection.

Few adult groups will meet daily through this period, but the members may be made aware of the meaning of each particular day for their private devotions; and the group will share fully in the general services of the church and of the community.

In the first three Gospels the story of this final great week is clear enough to follow. Mark's Gospel is clearest in marking the closing and openings of the separate days. John's Gospel pays least attention to the sequence of events. From study of the Gospels and from tradition, the meanings attached to the days give each its special significance in the whole drama and its special value to the life of the Christian.

Palm Sunday marks the triumphal entry, when Jesus the prophet was

(Continued on page 91)

THE DIRECTOR DISCUSSES —

"Is Your Group a Christian Fellowship?"

FAMILIAR to most Christians today is the statement with which pagans described members of the early Christian fellowship, "See how these Christians love one another." To be sure, there were dissensions and differing points of view in the Early Church. But this distinguishing characteristic of "love for the brethren" stood out.

Often one hears that the Church today has almost lost that important characteristic, that modern churches are more preoccupied with buildings and organization than they are with fostering significant Christian fellowship. My question is, "Is *your group* a Christian fellowship?"

At any time in history, but perhaps even more so now, Christian fellowship is imperative. The atom has been split. Our "one world" has been divided. People are fearful and harassed by the uncertainties of the time. There is need for a permanency and a Christian fellowship that nothing can destroy. "Fellowship" is a word that has been kicked around in a superficial manner. In service clubs, lodges, and other such groups there is fellowship. But is it completely satisfactory? There is one type of fellowship that leads to a "lost week end." There is another type of fellowship that ends in malicious gossip.

Possibly you are asking, "What is *Christian* fellowship?" Here is a definition: "Christian fellowship is that friendship with Christ which makes possible genuine fellowship with one another." Is this characteristic of your group? Does the spirit of friendliness have priority? Are all members, old and new, made to feel personally acquainted? One group had every member in the group call on new members. Invitations were extended to others with no previous connection. They doubled their membership in a year.

Can it really be said of your group, "See how these Christians love one another"? This is not sentimentality but comes from One who said, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

Sincerely yours,
RAYMOND V. KEARNS, JR.
Director of the Department of Adult Work

RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP

in January, February, March

THE first three months in the year present a number of red-letter days on which worship in adult groups can be especially meaningful. The beginning of a new year offers possibilities of reconsecration and personal inventory; the Church year points up the seasons of Epiphany and of Lent (see page 84); and the scheduling of Brotherhood Week, concurrent with the celebration of Abraham Lincoln's Birthday, gives opportunity to re-emphasize the social responsibilities of the gospel.

What follows is a collection of resources for these several days. They are not arranged in an order of worship, that task being left to those who plan the service. The *Geneva Fellowship Program Handbook* contains guidance for worship planning (pages 17, 18), and *The Book of Common Worship* serves as an ideal of the quality and form of our worship in the Reformed tradition.

It is well to remind ourselves that the group experience of worship does not require a long or formal service. Neither length of time spent in worship nor specific liturgical devices are essential to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Mere silence, for those who are accustomed to its use, is adequate for some to begin to think God's thoughts after him.

Approaching the New Year

Scripture selections appropriate to the occasion of a new year include *Ps. 91,* with its insistent faith in God, no matter what may befall; *Phil. 3: 7-14,* which so eloquently testifies to Paul's courage as he forges on, "forgetting those things which are behind"; and *Matt. 6: 19-34,* lifting up that section of the Sermon on the Mount wherein we are reminded how futile is our anxiety.

Some prayers for the new year are as follows:

"We gather together to ask thy blessing on this New Year, our Heavenly Father. Help us to remember thy blessings and thy guidance and protection through the past year, the friends and happy times, the ways in which we may have been able to grow, those things which, with thy help, we may have been able to do to please thee. Help us, too, to remember those ways in which we have failed thee, those times when we refused thy guiding and protecting hand, those gifts and opportunities we used for our own ends, only to find that we were still restless. Forgive us for our past failures, for Jesus Christ's sake. Since we have seen thy salvation, may we put all our trust, our hopes and our fears for this New Year, into thy hands. Grant that this day we may commit ourselves anew to thy service and to whatever may be thy will for us in the year ahead. In Jesus' name. Amen." [1]

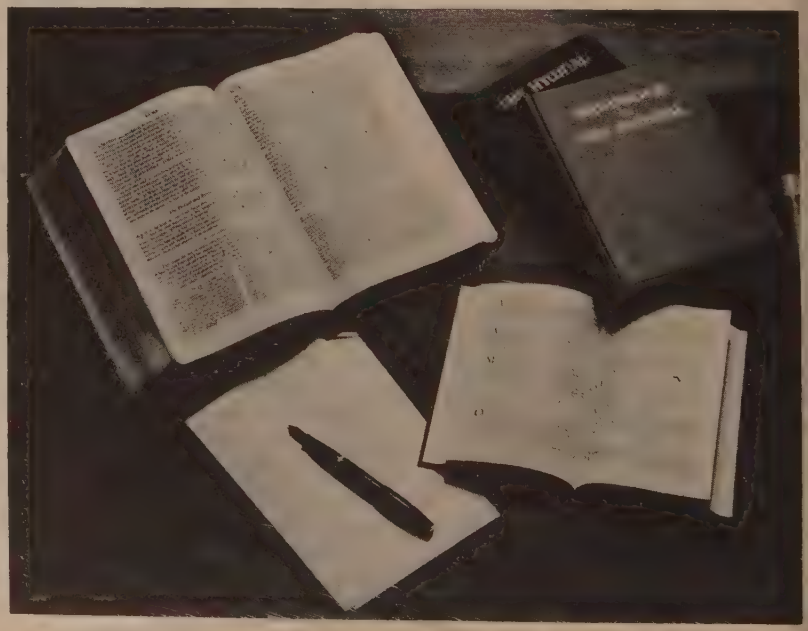
"Ever-living God, by whose mercy we have come to the gateway of another year; grant that we may enter it with humble and grateful hearts; and confirm our resolution, we beseech Thee, to walk more closely in Thy way, and labor more faithfully in Thy service, according to the teaching and example of Thy Son our Lord. Let not the errors and offenses of the past cling to us, but pardon us and set us free, that with purer purpose and a better hope we may renew our vows in Thy presence, and set forth under the guidance of Thy Spirit, to travel in that path which shineth more and more unto the perfect day of Thy heavenly Kingdom. Amen." [2]

Suitable hymns (all chosen from *The Hymnal*) to sing at the year's opening include "Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand," Hymn 470; "All Beautiful the March of Days," Hymn 471; and "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past," Hymn 77.

Epiphany, Light to the Gentiles

Commemorating the visit of the Wise Men to bring gifts to the Christ, Epiphany's deeper significance is the pulling power of the gospel to all the nations of the world. A fuller descrip-

[1] From *Prayers for Young People,* by Abigail Acker Johnson. The Westminster Press. Copyright, 1947, by W. L. Jenkins.
[2] By Henry van Dyke. From *The Book of Common Worship* (1932).



on of this short season in the hurch year is found on page 84.

Scripture passages for Epiphany n be chosen from *Matt., ch. 8; ohn, ch. 3;* and from the messages Paul, such as *Rom. 12: 6-16; ph., ch. 3; Col. 3: 12-17.*

Hymns for Epiphany, though not merous, do include several of outanding beauty. Among them are As with Gladness Men of Old," ymn 135; "Brightest and Best of ne Sons of the Morning," Hymn 6; and "O Worship the Lord in ne Beauty of Holiness," Hymn 7.

A prayer that phrases the signifiance of Epiphany is this one:

"O God, who by the leading of a ar didst manifest to the Gentiles ne glory of Thine only-begotten Son: rant us that, being led by the light Thy Holy Spirit, we may, in loring love and lowliest reverence, eld ourselves to Thy service; that hy kingdom of righteousness and eace may be advanced among all naons, to the glory of Thy name; rough Jesus Christ our Lord. men." [3]

Brotherhood Week

The Bible is rich with references o the needs for brotherhood. Famous mong these, and useful for Scripure readings in a worship service on this theme, are the parable of the Good Samaritan (*Luke 10: 30-37*); the story of Cain and Abel (*Gen. 4: 1-16*); and Isaiah's vision of the redemption of all creation in a permanent period of brotherhood (*Isa. 11: 1-9*).

A prayer for brotherhood and justice follows:

"O God, give us a clearer vision and more steadfast will. Save us from false judgment of others through rash conceit and an unloving pride; save us from the indolence which shrinks from labor, and the carelessness which takes no heed of great issues; save us from the fear that will not grapple with problems that may be too hard for us; save us from the languor and weariness that too often numb our best efforts, and the spirit of complaint that the reward is not ours.

"O give us of the lowliness and the love of Christ; teach us humility; awaken us from sloth; may we have more of the spirit of true sacrifice, that time and strength, thought and hope, may be given freely, ungrudgingly, with a constant joy, for the truth's sake and our brethren's sake in thee. Amen." [4]

Hymns of brotherhood include: "Rise Up, O Men of God!" Hymn 401; "Lift Up Our Hearts, O King of Kings," Hymn 405; "The Light of God Is Falling," Hymn 400.

The Season of Lent

Lent traditionally opens on a note of penitence. The first day, called Ash Wednesday, and those immediately following emphasize the need of everyone for confession and forgiveness. Should your group be meeting at this season, it would be timely to build a worship period around such a service as that used for the preparation for Holy Communion in *The Book of Common Worship* (1946), pages 136-154. A penitential psalm, such as *Ps. 51,* or *139,* or *86,* will fit well in such a service.

But Lent does more than emphasize our sin and need for cleansing. Lent also calls to mind the life and teachings of Jesus and the implications of these for our living. Any of the dramatic and descriptive passages concerning the ministry of our Lord are recommended: the healing and forgiving works (*Luke 18: 35-43; John 8: 1-11*), and the words of teaching (*Matt. 16: 21-28; Luke 13: 31-35*).

Many hymns in *The Hymnal* are of Lenten nature. (See Hymns 138-162.) These hymns likewise offer devotional poetry that can be read to enrich the worship.

[3] *The Book of Common Worship* (1946).
[4] From *Prayers for the Church Service eague.* Fourth Edition, 1930. Issued by the Massachusetts Council of the Church Serve League, Boston.

PLANS FOR YOUR *Winter Parties*

FIRST, we want to recommend one of the best new books for fun ideas that we have seen. Packed full of suggestions for winter ocial activities (or for any season) s *Gay Parties for All Occasions* Abingdon-Cokesbury Press; $2.95). t is by E. O. Harbin, compiler of *he Fun Encyclopedia;* so you know 's good. Directions are given for uch interesting events as "A White lephant Party," "A Christmas wapping Party," "Toyland Party," Cupid's Quest Party," "Heart Hooo Party," "A Washington-Lincoln arty," "An Irish Shenanigan Party."

Now here are some ideas that adult groups have told us they have tried and that we want to pass on to you.

Twelfth-Night Party

The twelfth night after Christmas is, historically, the closing of the yuletide season, and, traditionally, it has been the occasion of great celebration and jollity. The 79'ers of Northminster Church, Columbus, Ohio, use this date as the theme for their annual Twelfth-night party.

At each party a king, queen, and knave of festivities are chosen to preside over the coming year's frolic. This election is determined by the finding of tokens in the cake—a pea designates the queen, a bean the king, and a clove the knave. Each couple brings to the party a bit of Christmas greens and some poetry, homemade or selected, commemorating the Christmas season, deploring its close, or anticipating the coming year. The king opens the festivities by reading a short history of Twelfth-night and its traditions. The evening is filled with Christmas games, such as finding and listing objects in the room that symbolize Christmas—stars, greens, red candles, pictures, etc.; or writing a telegram to Santa, making words beginning with the letters found in CHRISTMAS. The climax of the fun comes with the burning of the greens in the open fireplace, each couple reciting its "poem" as the flames snap and crackle. During the refreshments the knave, as court jester, must sit under the table and urge all to eat heartily, an invitation

that is hardly necessary. With the finding of the last token in the Twelfth-night cake, the yuletide season is officially closed until the next year.

The Burning of the Greens

For nine years Lansdowne, Pa., has had an annual Twelfth-night celebration of the burning of the greens on the school grounds at five o'clock in the evening. Much planning is involved. All families are asked to put their Christmas trees out in front of their houses on the morning of that day, and community trucks collect them. Streets are roped off. Special lighting and loud-speakers are arranged. The fire department stands by to guard against the spread of the fire.

The celebration begins with the invocation by a minister. The community choristers sing several numbers. Another minister reminds the citizens of the significance of Twelfth-night or Epiphany. (See George Gibson's article, page 84.) There is a ceremonial fire lighting by the Boy Scouts. The climax is reached when the nearly three thousand trees and other greens burst into a roaring fire, lighted by one of the commissioners, assisted by the Boy Scouts.

This practice is now being sponsored by church groups and is carried on in many towns across the nation.

Killarney and Blarney

St. Patrick's Day is one of the easiest as well as one of the most delightful occasions for which to prepare. Let's say it's a dinner, though it could be a tea. Green candles and

shamrocks cut from green paper scattered over the tables make effective decorations. Of course, *everyone* must wear a bit of green. The waiters or waitresses may wish to go in for more than a bit. To make the affair a success, the toastmaster must really be Irish, with the proper lilt in his voice for the telling of jokes and folk tales. There should be a sheet of familiar and best-loved Irish songs for everyone to sing. A few lovely colleens, perhaps in costume, sing a group of the more difficult or lesser known songs. If the toastmaster has prepared fifteen to twenty minutes of Irish folk lore, that might complete the program. Or, an Irish travel film or fantasy insures a happy evening. Make inquiry of your nearest film distribution center well ahead of time.

Be sure that there is a host committee to welcome guests as they arrive.

Let's Have a Hobby Show

They tell us that *now's the time* to prepare for those leisure-time years by developing a hobby. Some folks are already well on their way and will be ready to register with the committee to exhibit their hobby. The rest of us are supposed to be stimulated by the party to get going on a hobby of our own.

Have these enthusiasts display their hobbies in one large room, if possible, and then stand by to answer questions as the guests arrive and go from one exhibit to another. Arrange chairs in the middle of the room, and after twenty to thirty minutes, ask everyone to sit down. Give each exhibitor five minutes to tell about his hobby and about how he happened to get off on that tack.

If the library or a bookstore will lend you a few hobby books for display, so much the better.

Your program can depend on the hobbies exhibited. If there are one or two of special interest in which the whole group might join, that would be fun. For instance, there is soap-carving. For this you would place the chairs around tables in the center of the room, and each person would be provided with the equipment necessary. The soap specialist would take the group through all the steps of carving something very simple.

Finally, there are those choice persons whose hobby is food (that is, preparing it). They would invite everyone to have refreshments. This would doubtless be voted the most popular hobby of the evening and one in which all would participate!

The Twenties and Thirties

By John Leslie Lobingier

The rapid growth of young adult work in Protestant churches over the past two decades is one of the most significant recent trends in the life of the Church. The following article by Dr. Lobingier clearly indicates a picture of this work in a sister denomination, the Congregational Christian Churches. It is strikingly similar to that in our own denomination. His findings will bring fresh insight to those responsible for young adult work in local churches and a better understanding of the problems and possibilities in this field. This article is a "must" for officers and program committees.

RECENTLY I set out to secure some information about young adult church groups in various parts of the country—some on the Pacific Coast, some in New England, some in the Middle West, some in the East, for one senses a new interest in this age. Although many churches still neglect it badly, others are aware of its needs and possibilities and succeed in holding people beyond the youth period, through their twenties and thirties.

Directly or indirectly, I approached some hundreds of Congre-

This article is condensed from *Advance*, a publication of the Congregational Christian Churches. Used by permission.

ational Christian churches—small, rge, and of medium size. Of those hich furnished information, 174 ave some kind of young adult group, nd what is said in this article is ased on the situation in these 174 hurches. In increasing numbers hurches seem to have some sort of lub or class or fellowship group for nose whom they think of as young dults. . . .

Some of these churches are not ontent with one young adult group. here may be a couples club and also younger business and professional women's class; there may be a young adult class and also a younger women's mission circle; there may e a young men's group and also a younger mothers' guild. Thus it happens that though about half these churches have one such organization, bout half have two or three or even our young adult agencies.

For whom do these groups exist? These young adults have a way of grouping themselves according to heir interests, friendships, or common experiences; but above all others, two types of groups stand out: (1) *The general young adult organization,* including young men and young women, married and single, somewhere in the twenties and thirties. This stands first, and it is not surprising. The small church hesitates to break up into too many segments. Even the larger church often prefers to maintain a unity that is in danger of being broken down if it encourages too many groupings. (2) Next in popularity is *the young married couples group.* Some studies would no doubt give them first place, for their growth in recent years has been rapid. Young married people have so much in common that it is easy to understand this trend. They like to do things together, and it is difficult to think of anything more important for Christian home life than this experience of husband and wife gradually putting down roots in the life of the church through a wholesome and normal fellowship with other young married couples like themselves. . . . (3) Another grouping . . . is that of *the unmarried young adults.* They represent only about six per cent of the young adult agencies in these churches. All too often they seem to be forgotten and have no congenial church group where they may feel at home. . . .

How many members do these young adult agencies enroll? The number varies widely, as one would expect, for they represent churches both large and small. The range is from 5 to 385—although this latter figure stands quite apart, with no near competitor. The median figure is more important, and this is in the upper twenties. There is really no special significance in discussing the size of these groups, except to point out that size is not important. Churches find it worth-while to organize their young adults, even though the number is in the teens or even less than ten; the great majority are in the twenties and thirties. The larger the membership becomes, the more difficult it is to mold it into a real fellowship group—a fact that may be some consolation to those who long for a membership of 100 but cannot seem to get beyond 22!

What sort of program and activities do these young adult groups carry on? Four points stand out: (1) In most cases (but not all) they have some kind of *discussion group* or *class study.* Bible study is mentioned more often than anything else. . . . (2) A large number of these organizations are addressed by *outside speakers,* occasionally or frequently. (3) The activities include *social and recreational* features to a considerable extent. (4) The fourth point receives less emphasis than the other three—these groups include *worship* as a regular part of their program. Perhaps some take it for granted without mentioning it. Perhaps some feel that other phases of the ministry of the church provide for the devotional life of young adults rather than their own fellowship group. At least it is stressed less than the other features.

This fourfold statement, however, does not complete the picture. The program activities of young adult groups do not fit into the traditional pattern as much as this statement might imply. Aside from the fact that they may seek new ways of study and discussion and a social or recreational program that varies from their past experience, they seem to be interested in a schedule of activities that is varied in character and that does not fit into the old grooves. Here are some of the activities these young adults recall when they describe the items of their program that have interested them: dinners, musical events, lectures, movies, forums, trips, a dance, an outdoor meeting, entertaining a missionary, book reviews, business meetings, a travel lecture, worship, a quiz program, inspirational readings, discussions, a Christmas tree, singing, a picnic, games, the annual banquet, "Guest Night," bowling, ping-pong, shuffleboard, dramatics, an auction sale, a party to meet teachers of the grade schools, theater party, sewing, a religious meeting, current events, auto trips, hikes, Bible study, hobbies, etc., etc.

When they have met as study groups, what subjects have they used that they recall with satisfaction? Some make it clear that their organizations are not study groups! Some follow no printed courses. Still others use regular materials designed for study groups. Among the many themes are these:

The Christian home
War and peace
Ancient and contemporary philosophies
Juvenile problems
Modern interpretation of the Bible
Child care and child psychology
The teachings of Jesus
How we got our Bible
Book reviews
Labor problems
Personal religious living
Church music
Social problems
Religious book study
Church history
Our community
Catholicism and Protestantism
How to teach in the church school

What service do these young adult groups render to church and community? Comparatively few answered with the simple word "none." One

said: "None as yet. A similar group several years ago was killed by plunging too quickly into rather expensive service. We are waiting until we get established this time." These groups do not exist for themselves alone. They do have some concern for their church and community, and the types of service that some render may be suggestive to others. Only a small percentage of answers are here noted:

Helped to rebuild a playground for the underprivileged.
Take entire charge of nursery during Sunday church service.
Raised money for church furnishings.
Helped furnish social hall for community social affairs.
Furnishes teachers for the Sunday church school.
Furnishes Christmas decorations for the church.
Helps in projects to beautify the building.
Act as ushers.
Bought hymnals and choir robes.
Sponsored an art class for children.
Co-operated with the Red Cross, making blankets and first-aid kits.
Study and promotion of a housing program for the city.
Assisted in building a church recreation center.
Improved the church stage.
Painted the floor of the social hall.
Sewed for visiting nurse association.
Sponsored Girl Scout troop.
Raised money.
Helped in local church work: choir, ushering, cabinet, teaching, volunteer office work.
Sang Christmas carols for shut-ins.
Distributed temperance literature.
Helped with Christmas and Easter pageants.
Furnished transportation on Sundays for elderly members.
Took charge of annual Red Cross roll call.
Planted shrubs around the church.
Assisted in Every Member Canvass.

In addition to group service, an attempt was made to discover to what extent the members serve the church as *individuals*. It would take too much space to list the various ways in which members of these reporting groups serve their churches. Repeatedly they appear in the usual areas of leadership—choir, Sunday school teaching, ushering, membership on church committees, and the like. Many of them are deacons, junior deacons, or other church officers.

In brief, many of the younger men and women who are affiliated with church groups of the twenties and thirties are taking large responsibility in the life and work of the church. One often hears the fear expressed that young adult organizations will become exclusive and thus make participation by their members in the general work of the church less likely. This is not a fair statement. Experience seems to show that these young men and women can be loyal to their own groups and at the same time assume a reasonable share of responsibility in the total work of the church. In fact, their membership in the young adult fellowship group makes this even more likely, for it holds them to the church when many would otherwise fall away and thus puts them in the way of being drawn more completely into the activities of the church itself.

What part of the program is most interesting to young adults themselves? Of many answers these are typical, and they are the words of young adults:

"Meetings that are held in homes provide an excellent way for deepening friendships."
"Discussion and field trips."
"Fellowship that is established among persons who are often without any other church contacts, and fellowship with other churches."
"Variety in program is most satisfactory."
"The social value of getting together under Christian auspices."
"Discussions"; "Outings and parties"; "Book reviews."
"The fellowship of young adults in an organization, within the walls of the church, providing an opportunity for expression of talents."
"Service activities for the church."
"The weekly class meeting is the most constructive but the monthly social the most popular."
"Well-planned devotions, poems, and comments."
"The complete informality—no officers, no dues—and the co-operative, communal method of operation."
"Work periods (such projects as Christmas boxes)."
"Informal religious discussions in which members present every point of view, with no argument and no attempt to change anyone's opinion."
"Discussion of religion or world conditions."
"The good fellowship experienced by these young married folks as they work and play together."
"Talks by members of our own group on their work."
"Hymn singing before meetings."

Running through such comments as these, one can read between the lines that *fellowship* is a major value sought by young adults; that *informality* is something they cherish; that they seek *no definite organizational pattern;* and that the *worthwhile things* are not often crowded out by the lighter and unimportant activities.

13—The Universal Christ

(Continued from page 40)

When they act in obedience to his command, their success is great indeed. For John this event is clearly a missionary parable. By the power of the living Christ, the Christian missionaries are able to perform supernatural feats, and the performance of these miracles of evangelism is a sure proof that the Lord is alive and present in his Church. The nets will not break under the strain, even when there are "mass movements" as a result of the missionary labors of the faithful; the Church can gather in all the fish in the sea—all the world—because of the presence of her risen Lord (*John 21: 11:* "The net was not rent").

Some of the details of the story puzzle us. But we can clearly see its meaning as John intends it to be understood. The "breakfast" of the risen Lord by the lakeside is a reference to the Eucharist in the Early Church and is John's counterpart of the phrase in another Gospel, "He was known of them in the breaking of the bread" (*Luke 24: 35*). The story teaches us that the risen Lord empowers his Church in its missionary labors and feeds his hungering disciples (*John 21: 5*) with the true bread.

In the latter portion of the chapter John returns to the pastoral metaphor that he had employed so effectively earlier in his Gospel. His final word concerns the Lord's charge to his disciples, through Peter, to feed his sheep (cf. *Acts 20: 28*).

The Journal of John Woolman

(Continued from page 75)

fulfilled in human society. Woolman did not retire from responsibility. His concern made him a most active worker among men. (3) The concern itself was always secondary to the inward life that nurtured it. (See Douglas V. Steere's *Doors Into Life,* pp. 96-98.)

What was the ultimate effect of Woolman's all-consuming efforts? Sweet calls John Woolman the person "chiefly responsible for the final disappearance of slavery from among the American Quakers." . . . "The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting between 1758 and 1776, by a series of regu-

tions passed from year to year, rovided for the complete elimina- on of slaveholders."[2] Other Meet- gs followed the same course from 83 to 1787. Likewise, other reli- ous and political groups in the colo- es worked so vigorously for the olition of the practice that "at the ose of the War for Independence e leadership of the new nation was actically a unit in its opposition to e institution of slavery."[2]

With the invention of the cotton n, however (1792), which "made ssible the profitable growing" of tton in the South, the picture al- red and slaves became great eco- mic assets. So Woolman's prophecy me true, that "if the white people tain a resolution to prefer their own utward prospect of gain to all other nsiderations, and do not act con- ientiously toward them [the slaves] s fellow creatures, I believe that rden will grow heavier and heavier ntil times change in a way disagree- ble to us."

Have We a *Dependable* Press?

(Continued from page 79)

he development of both public and rivate bureaus of information and nvestigation on a local, regional, r national basis. Today we can get atings of current motion pictures nd of radio programs.[4] There are any literary and art critics who ctually evaluate books and theater nd concert programs rather than erely print press agent releases. Why should there not be critics and ervices that rate and evaluate our ewspapers and magazines in terms f their accuracy, fairness, and "full ccess to the day's intelligence"? Education institutions might well do his for the papers of their area or tate. Readers of newspapers might e encouraged to belong to social ction groups in which the members ccept some responsibility for keep- ng one another informed and for xerting social pressure after making careful study of varied sources of nformation.

[2] From *The Story of Religion in America,* William Warren Sweet.

[4] Movie rating services are offered in *The hristian Century, Parents' Magazine, resbyterian Life,* Consumers' Union Pub- cations, by the Protestant Motion Picture ouncil, etc.

Steeples Over America

(Continued from page 83)

January: Morningside Community Center, Rev. James H. Robinson, director. This busy interracial center in New York's Harlem draws in people from all over the area.

February: Carver Homes Community Center, Portsmouth, Va. This is for Negroes.

March: Camac Center, Philadelphia. This serves Negroes in a crowded part of the city.

May: Luyanó Church, Havana, Cuba. This church has a seven-day program in the residential part of the city.

June: Any Spanish-speaking projects in any city, for here Mexican migrant population centers.

August: El Guacio community center, La Marina Neighborhood House, and Arecibo Church, in Puerto Rico. Overcrowding and poverty are serious Puerto Rican problems.

September: Field work in the Negro sections of Detroit.

October: Alaska, particularly Yukon Presbytery.

November: Kaufman-Van Zandt Larger Parish in Texas, a strong rural parish.

December: Donaldina Cameron House (the old Mission Home building), San Francisco. This serves an increasing Chinese population and is a center for an active and vigorous Chinese Christian group.

The Meaning of Epiphany and Lent

(Continued from page 85)

proclaimed King. The Lordship of Christ is the theme.

Monday is the day of the cleansing of the Temple, with its continuous challenge to us to keep the Church pure, according to the will of its Lord.

Tuesday is the day of conflict, when the enemies of Jesus tried to trap him with questions, and he showed his keenness of intellect in confounding them.

Wednesday is the day of silence. There is no Biblical record for this day unless some of John's writing belongs here as showing the inner life Christ shared with his disciples on the eve of the Last Supper.

Maundy Thursday marks the Last Supper. It is named from the beginning of the Latin sentence, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." As the origin of the central sacrament of the church, it is properly celebrated by the whole church in a special Communion service, with all groups participating.

Good Friday is the day of the Passion and the cross. Again the whole church, and more recently the entire community, observes this day in special noonday or three-hour services. It marks the acme of the selfless, sacrificial love of Christ for all men, and his forgiving grace by which men are united to the Father.

Then follows *Saturday,* another day of silence while Christ lies in the tomb. No public services are in order. Prayerful devotion is the mood of all Christians as they await the Easter triumph.

Lent properly closes at Saturday noon. Easter begins a new season as the Church celebrates the continuing triumph of the resurrection. A group that has been led through a significant experience during Lent will not lose interest now, but will carry the spirit of Easter into its next studies.

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For Church Officers

ELDERS, DEACONS, TRUSTEES

A Pastor Instructs His Officers

By John Clark Finney

Dr. Finney, co-pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Germantown, Pennsylvania, gives counsel to the men who will constitute the local church boards during the coming year.

SO YOU HAVE BEEN MADE AN ELDER

THAT'S too bad, for both you and your church, if it is to be just an honor bestowed upon a worthy man. The office calls for devoted labor, and it does not fulfill its purpose unless you are going to give it consecration, creative thinking, enthusiasm, time, and work. There have been instances when it was little more than recognition of long years of "good standing"; and there are always those who cherish the honor of being an elder but who do not seriously function in the office except to be on hand for official occasions.

As far as the New Testament is concerned, you may call yourself a "bishop," if you like, for the Scripture uses these terms interchangeably: elder, presbyter, overseer, bishop, pastor. Your minister is a "teaching" elder; you are a "ruling" elder. Both of you are ordained to the office by the "laying on of hands." There could be no more solemn service than that of your ordination, in which you affirm your belief in the Scriptures as the Word of God, "the only infallible rule of faith and practice"; and the Confession of Faith as containing the doctrine taught in the Scriptures; affirming also your acceptance of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church; promising to perform all the duties of your office; and, finally, promising *"to study the peace, unity, and purity of the Church."* This latter promise is not just a pleasant and suitable idea, added to more serious obligations. *It is a climax.* Its fulfillment on the part of the elders would make a disrupting influence impossible in any church and would bring into force once more the characteristic that first called forth the recorded comment in the non-Christian world: "See how these Christians love one another."

Naturally, the New Testament insists in the first place that you be essentially the right kind of person. It is required of an elder that he be a man of God and an example of really Christian life and not an occasion for any to stumble. Have you read the first chapter of Titus? Try it, in either the Revised Standard or the Moffatt Translation: "Appoint elders . . . men who are blameless, married only once, whose children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate. For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled; he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it." (R.S.V.) If this seems to forbid your being an elder, do not try to compromise with it, and do not turn away from it; but stop short and consecrate yourself to Christ, and cut out of your life what you know is inconsistent with the requirements of this office.

You are now to assume responsibility with the minister and the other members of the session for rule and administration in relation to everything that has to do with the spiritual character and interests of your church. This includes a great deal: the reception, dismission, and discipline of members; the arrangement and administration of the sacraments; the pulpit supply; the character and conduct of all church services; the choir and organist; the entire Christian education leadership, study courses and program, including, of course, the church school; evangelistic visitation; bulletins and publications; community service and co-operation; oversight and control of all your church organizations, all your recreational interests and groups, and of everything else that takes place in the church building or on its property, or that in any way uses the name of your church.

Since the session is responsible for the oversight of the members, it is essential that there be some definite arrangement, by geographical district or otherwise according to circumstances, by which each member of the session becomes actually responsible for reasonable oversight over a definite portion of the membership, visiting them regularly, reporting emergencies, needs, changes, and other important information to the minister or church office. This is especially necessary, since in most churches it is physically impossible for the minister to supply more than a percentage of the individual contact that is needed. If the church is very large, the board of deacons could share in this arrangement. The session also has the responsibility of seeing that new members are individually introduced to the interests and work of the church and actually related to its organizational life. Much of this also could be assigned to a board of deacons.

Moreover, the entire responsibility for determining and raising the benevolences, including the support of our Boards, is upon the session. The session should have a separate be-

The congregation of this Church, in the mode ost approved and in use in this congregation, ving elected *A., B., C., D.* to the office of Ruling ier, and *they* having signified *their* willingness serve, we do now, in the name of the Lord sus Christ, proceed to *their* ordination.

e Minister shall say:

You will now make answer to the following estions which the Constitution of this Church quires of you:

DO YOU believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of od, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

swer:

I do so believe.

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Conssion of Faith of this Church, as containing e system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripres?

swer:

I do so receive it.

Do you approve of the government and discine of the Presbyterian Church in the United ates of America?

swer:

I do.

evolence treasurer. It is important at your church organizations shall ot act altogether independently in elation to benevolences. In the long in, we can best advance the Kingom of Christ by first doing all we an to support the work of the Boards nd agencies for which our own deomination is responsible.

Be sure that your session meets t a regular time *and that it always eets*. It is a grievous sin to allow ourself personally to dominate a ession, contrary to the participation nd judgment of the other members, or the Presbyterian Church is a emocratic form of government. Help o make each meeting a live, imporant, and strategic occasion, for you re leading a war against opposition o the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It ecomes apparent that ordinarily a ession should be divided into comittees in order to function effecively, such as a worship committee church services, music, pulpit suply, sacraments, Sunday bulletins, tc.); congregational committee oversight, visitation, orientation of ew members, congregational funcons, publications, etc.); service ommittee (missions, benevolences, ommunity service, etc.); education ommittee (Sunday church school, urriculum, youth activities, weekay and vacation church schools. tc.); committee on social education nd action (if this has not been comitted to the deacons); committee n men's work; committee for servcemen and veterans; and other ommittees for various purposes, permanent or temporary, according to circumstances. The committee arrangement may be much simpler for a small church.

Should you be appointed to a committee, to do nothing about it is the easiest way conceivable to help ruin your church, and the usual way for this is just not to have any report at the meeting of the session. If work for your committee is not put into your hands, hunt work and devise work. That is what, under God, you are on the committee for. Never let there be a meeting without a report.

It is strongly advised that sessions adopt rotation in office. New blood is always essential to successful work. If after three years there is no one who can take your place, there is something radically wrong about your church. Besides, you can be returned to active duty after a year. Since the responsibilities of the session reach out into so many directions, it is important that the session be in close co-operation with the board of trustees, and it is never fair to involve the trustees in financial responsibility without their understanding and acceptance. It is a good thing, therefore, to have one elder (no more) who is also a trustee and who will serve as liaison between the two boards. It is also a great help to have a joint finance committee to prepare the entire church budget and to submit the separate parts to the congregation meeting for approval.

Now that you are an elder, it will be your duty, in turn, to represent your session at the meetings of your presbytery. Be sure to make notes on the proceedings, and do not fail to give a brief account at the next meeting of your session. Don't let the same elder be sent as commissioner to presbytery every time. Every member of the session should take his turn, if possible, if it is going to mean the most to your church. Perhaps also the presbytery may someday elect you as one of its commissioners to the synod or to the General Assembly.

If you take these responsibilities seriously, you may become the sort of elder needed in the Church of Christ, and one that will make us glad to be Presbyterians.

SO YOU HAVE BEEN MADE A DEACON

You are now treading in succession to Stephen, a most notable Christian. The account of the origin of this office is a very brief and simple one: "There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. . . . And they chose [those] whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." (*Acts 6: 1-3, 5, 6.*) Accordingly, a board of deacons has traditionally been charged with the social and economic interests of the congregation, freeing the session for its primary responsibility—that of concern for the spiritual interests of the congregation. But it is impossible to have a good spiritual condition without a good social and economic condition.

The qualifications for a deacon are not second grade in relation to those for an elder. Here is what Paul says about this in writing to Timothy (*I Tim. 3: 8-13,* R.S.V.): "Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Like the minister and the elders, you too have been ordained to your office and set apart by the laying on of hands. You have said, in answer to

the same questions put to an elder at ordination, that "you believe the Scriptures . . . to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice"; that you accept the Confession of Faith as containing the Scriptural system of doctrine, and also the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church. You, too, have promised to perform all the duties of your office, and, like the elders, you have promised "to study the peace, unity, and purity of the Church." This last affirmation is as important as any of the others, but unfortunately often as ignored as though it never had been affirmed before God.

A generation ago, the duty of the deacons was interpreted as applying for the most part to the care of the poor, the sick, and the distressed. But the conception of their possible usefulness in the field of social and economic service has been very considerably enlarged these later days, although there are churches that have not yet caught the vision of how important a board of deacons can be. In some instances the need for service in promoting conscious unity, enthusiasm, brotherhood, and family relationship to the church is tragically needed. In other instances, much of the work properly belonging to a board of deacons is well done by various church committees. In such cases, there is no wisdom in breaking up a good committee for the sake of organizational plan; but there might be a looking forward to a time when all such committees can properly be included in a board of deacons. In a great many instances the board of deacons doesn't really amount to much, because it is not set up on a proper and important plan. If the church is large, this board needs to share with the session an arrangement, by geographical districts or otherwise, whereby each deacon shall have oversight over a definite portion of the church membership who shall be regularly visited and followed up, with report to the minister or church office of all emergencies, needs, changes, and other important information. The board of deacons should assume also much of the responsibility for actually relating new members to the life and work of the church, and fostering personal care over them until they are well integrated. In this connection there should be a tour through the entire church plant, if it is a large one, with explanations of its uses and all activities connected with it. There are various visitations needed from time to time, such as for personal evangelistic challenge and for the Every Member Canvass, in which the deacons should be ready to participate fully.

Of course, one primary responsibility is to look after "the needy," providing medical and legal help as well as financial and material help, and perhaps serving also as an employment bureau. Social service should not be undertaken except in co-operation with the community social agencies, which have important case information and advice and to which, in many instances, cases should be submitted for solution. It is an invaluable aid to the board of deacons if you are fortunate enough to have a professional social worker as a member. An untrained and inexperienced spirit of generosity can be a liability and not a help. Ministry to the sick, the shut-in, and also the absentee, can be made important. The board of deacons should assume responsibility for the distribution of flowers and also for helpful tokens and needed baskets, etc., at Christmas and at other times, as occasion may suggest.

The board of deacons may very properly take over the responsibility summarized in the Presbyterian Church under "Social Education and Action." It could also assume responsibility for the interests of the church's servicemen, but they are perhaps more properly served directly through the session. There is much that the deacons can do in connection with welcoming both strangers and members, not only at the church services but also at all other occasions. If the ushering is in their charge, they should also have responsibility for order, arrangement, ventilation, and condition of the sanctuary. Spiritual effect can be opposed and defeated by distracting, annoying, or untoward physical conditions. There are many other services that deacons can perform, such as provision and care for the elements in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; various sorts of community interests and service; visiting hospitals, homes, and other institutions, and arranging religious and entertainment programs in them; arranging church social and recreational occasions; responsibility for certain youth organizations; providing transportation to the church; responsibility for certain items of church office work. Most of these responsibilities could be included in committees on visitation, orientation, welfare, and community service.

Like other boards of the church, this board, too, will undoubtedly serve best if the membership is rotary, so that no deacon shall serve for more than two terms of three years each, in succession, with at least one year out before again being elected. It is a well-proved mistake to have a member of the board preside at its meetings. This board should be presided over by the minister, in the same manner as in the session.

SO YOU HAVE BEEN MADE A TRUSTEE

Let us hope that you are not accepting this office merely as an honor, but that you will give consecrated business service to this most important organization in the world —the Church of Christ. If you cannot be active as a trustee, do not hinder your church and the Kingdom by continuing in office.

Let us hope also that your church has come to the point where it arranges public recognition of your election as a trustee in the Sunday church service. At such an occasion you are asked publicly to promise diligent service to the temporal affairs of your church; and "to study the peace, unity, and purity of the Church." The minister, the elders, and the trustees are all asked to pledge themselves to this latter responsibility. If all officers of a church remembered this pledge or took it seriously, many most difficult and most regrettable church situations would never have arisen, and many pitiable weaknesses would never have been experienced.

Just as the session is responsible for all that concerns the spiritual

interests of your church, and the board of deacons for all that concerns the social and economic interests of your membership, so the board of trustees is responsible for all the physical and "material" interests of your church, that is, for the grounds, buildings, properties, and investments of your church; all maintenance and repair; the furnishings and equipment; the mechanics necessary for its physical operation; business administration; safety precautions; the office and secretaries; the sextons and employees; insurance; all salaries and pensions; presbytery assessment. It is to be noted that the trustees as such have nothing to do with the calling of a pastor (except agreement as to salary), pulpit supply, the benevolences, the music, the Sunday church school, or any of the services, organizations, programs, or activities of the church.

The board of trustees, with the approval of the congregation, has the serious responsibility of determining and raising the money required for self-support. This should be done in co-operation with the session and its benevolence interests, and can best be done through a joint finance committee of the two boards, which shall agree upon the current expenses and benevolence budgets to be submitted to the congregational and corporation meetings. At the congregational meeting a chairman is elected and a committee appointed to represent all interests in the church. The responsibility for any general financial solicitation in the congregation for any purpose whatsoever is in the hands of the session, in order to prevent too many appeals and any appeal at the wrong time. Since the concerns of the trustees and of the session often interlock, it is important that these two boards proceed in mutual understanding and co-operation; and that, for this purpose, one trustee be also a member of the session, reporting to each of these boards the point of view of the other and bringing them into unison. It will also greatly strengthen mutual understanding, co-operation, consecration, and enthusiasm if there can be at least once a year a joint meeting of the session, deacons, and trustees, at which the entire church situation shall be reported and reviewed, and at which also church projects and program for the year ahead shall be proposed, discussed, and approved. This occasion can be in the form of an all-day or over-night "retreat." If this can be held away from your home community, it will be a much better success.

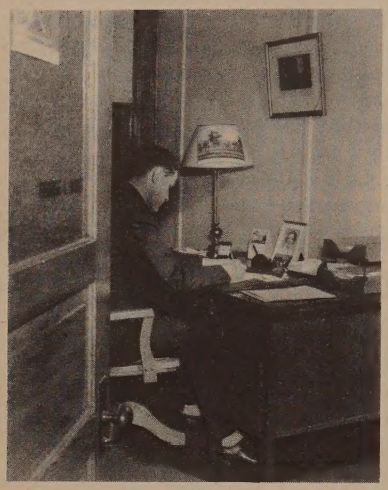
The board of trustees of one fairly large church does most of its work through the following committees: executive and finance, personnel, office advisory, property, endowment planning, annual fund raising, and nominating. But such matters must be arranged to suit the size and requirements of your own church. In small churches, sometimes for the sake of convenience, matters are left in the hands of some willing individual trustee. But this is not Presbyterian, and a church can never have health and strength as a one-man institution. It must find and train men to assume responsibility and to meet at regular times to discuss and execute church business. Even when there is "no business" at the regular time for meeting, the board should meet and aggressively devise it. It will help, too, if you have a rotary system of membership and keep bringing fresh blood to the board. One of the worst things that can happen is for the present board to hold on to its office.

Like most churches, your church is probably incorporated. In that case, your church charter stipulates when your annual corporation meeting and election of trustees must be held, and specifies who is eligible to be elected trustee and who is eligible to vote for trustee. Church charters are not all alike, and their specifications differ. Since you are incorporated, you must hold a corporation meeting at the time specified in your charter, at which time there shall be an election of trustees according to charter requirements. This meeting is in the hands of the trustees. It is customary for the board of trustees to make its complete annual report to the congregation on this occasion. This corporation meeting can follow immediately after the congregational meeting (duly called), at which the session will have reported in full for the year, and at which any other matters will have been considered by the congregation. If your charter calls for the corporation meeting at an unfavorable time of the year, have your charter revised.

Since the authority of the presbytery over any individual church must be recognized, it is necessary that the board of trustees realize that, in the last analysis, a church property cannot be disposed of except in accordance with the approval of the presbytery; and that when a church ceases to function as a church or departs from Presbyterian standards, the property reverts to the presbytery. Not only must proposals to merge, to relocate, or to be dissolved, be approved by the presbytery, but most presbyteries require that proposals to raise funds outside your own congregation, or proposals for purchasing additional property, erecting a new building, or putting improvements on the property, must all be approved by the presbytery. Our Form of Government does not allow church property to be either mortgaged or sold without the written consent of the presbytery.

If you have business ability and familiarity with business affairs, and good judgment and consecrated common sense, you can be of great service to your church as a trustee. Many a church suffers from unalert and incompetent business management. Many another suffers from business management that is not consecrated. Men who are accustomed to large business responsibilities and who are of unquestioned integrity do not always seem to have an adequate conception of what a church is, what it is for, or its Great Commission, or to understand that the Church must always, in all things, have the heart, mind, and purpose of Jesus Christ, or it is no Church. It is a great mistake when meetings of a board of trustees are held without prayer. A prayerful approach helps to consecrate the business of your church and helps it also to glorify God.

Over the Crossroads Desk



"The customers always write." Two issues of CROSSROADS have been used in the churches at the time that I am preparing this column, and many of you have already written to me. I am glad we are editing the kind of magazine people want to write about! Of course, many of the letters have been from readers who, quite understandably, miss the familiar patterns of the adult study magazine that preceded this one. Many very helpful suggestions have come for improving our material. And a gratifying number of our correspondents have expressed appreciation for the new and distinctive features of CROSSROADS. All these letters have been carefully read; we hope you will continue to send your comments "over the CROSSROADS desk."

In our "Books for Christian Study" course a year ago we recommended and outlined *Beyond Personality,* by C. S. Lewis. Subsequently, Mr. Lewis wrote, asking us to correct an error of thought that was inadvertently suggested by one point in our outline. We are glad to publish his letter clarifying the issue. He writes:

> After the extreme kindness with which I have been treated in CROSSROADS, it seems ungracious to draw your attention to what I believe to be an error. I would certainly not do so for pedantry, but I feel I must because it might do some readers harm. In Vol. I, No. 2 (Jan.-March, 1951), p. 78, col. 3, your article reads (Section II), "God 'begat' his Son . . . that we . . . might become sons.' Surely I never said so! I said (Table V) that the Son *becomes incarnate* that we might become sons, which, as you know, is Scriptural or patristic. To suggest that the begetting of the Son "before the worlds," the eternal generation, is in any way contingent upon *our* Fall, or on the Creation, would be a very different thing. It would be equivalent to saying that the blessed Trinity would not be what it eternally, freely, and necessarily is unless God had created Man. This would involve the Pantheist error that God requires the world for the completion of his own nature. And it might encourage "the weaker brethren" in the very unscriptural idea that God exists for our sake as a Headmaster exists for the school's sake. I wonder would you see your way to slipping in a correction? You needn't mention that it came from me if you prefer not to—I'm not bothering about that. But the error itself might be dangerous. It is so *very* hard to get into modern heads the idea that we (and all creation, angels, and archangels) are wholly unnecessary to God.
>
> Yours sincerely,
> C. S. Lewis.

One of our editors is reported to have registered at a hotel last year and put the date 1954 after her name. *Time* is one of the most amazing factors involved in editing a quarterly magazine. So that you may know why many of the suggestions you make for our publications cannot be incorporated until long after you have made them, let me show you the time schedule on which this magazine operates.

You are reading this page sometime in January, February, or March, 1952. I am writing this column in March, 1951, at the very last minute before I turn the manuscript of the entire magazine over to the copy-editing section of the Publication Division which works on all the curriculum magazines. For five weeks several people in that section —principally Miss Mary Van Dyke, head of the section, and Miss Lucille Wolfe, copy editor for CROSSROADS and *Westminster Teacher*—will read every word, check facts, and count lines to see if the material will fit the way I have planned it. Then it will be sent to the printer in Crawfordsville, Indiana. About six weeks later the first proof of the magazine will come back to Philadelphia. Again it will be read word for word, much rechecking will be done, vacant spaces will be filled, and articles that are too long will be cut. This job is done in two weeks. Back to Crawfordsville goes the magazine looking by now as if plastic surgery had been performed on it. Two weeks later a second proof is sent to us. This is read again and the corrections and changes checked. Then early in November mailings are started, and your church receives its order shortly thereafter.

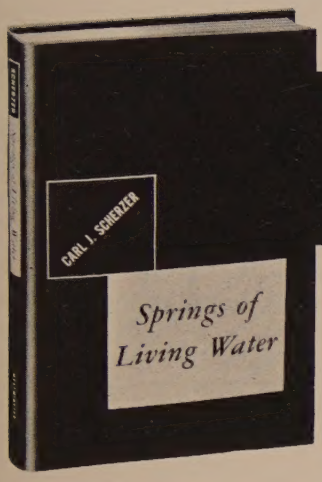
Before March 10 (the editor's deadline for this issue) all the lessons must be written. (The authors for this issue happen to live in London, England, and Wooster, Ohio.) The lessons must be edited, typed, approved by the editor in chief and the curriculum committee, and fitted into the allotted space. In addition, pictures must be selected—with the help of Mrs. Elsie S. Costello, of the Publication Division —and the program section must be prepared and approved. John Charles Wynn, of the Department of Adult Work, prepares that section after consultation with the editor. Nelson J. Wright, also in that department, secures the articles for the church officers' section.

George L. Hunt

Editor, CROSSROADS

NEW BOOKS

for spiritual health

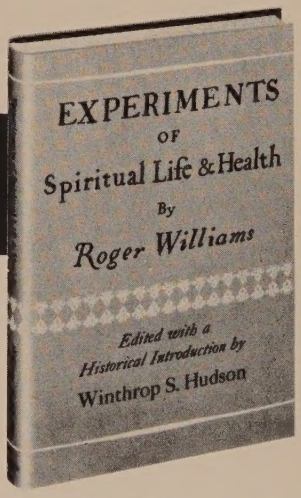


SPRINGS OF LIVING WATER

by Carl J. Scherzer

A Pastoral Aid Book

This is a guide to the spiritual resources available to the sick. The problems most frequently encountered in the author's experience as hospital chaplain, and in his interviews with the sick are considered. Portions of Scripture are given to help solve those problems. Great hymns of the church and prayers are also used to aid the patient. The table of contents is an index to the reader's particular needs. Although this book is intended for the sick and those who care for them, the chaplain and the pastor will also find it useful. **$1.50**



EXPERIMENTS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE AND HEALTH

by Roger Williams

Edited by Winthrop S. Hudson

This is a devotional classic written by Roger Williams originally as a comforting letter to his wife, who was recovering from an illness and troubled with spiritual doubts and discouragements. It has not been available in print to the public for many years. A book for those who seek guidance and reassurance in the face of despair. It deals with the assurance of a life of grace for those beset by spiritual weakness and sickness; self-examination to "discover our soul's spots and blemishes;" and directions for preserving and increasing spiritual health. **$2.00**

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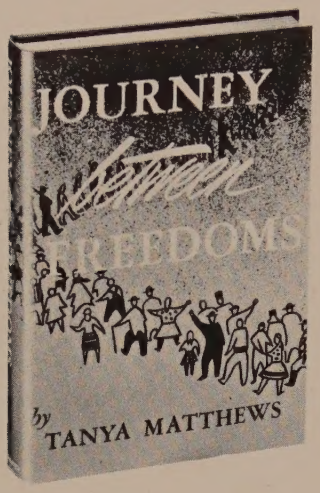
A NEW BOOK — *for adults*



JOURNEY *between* FREEDOMS

An Autobiography
by TANYA MATTHEWS

In thirty years after the Russian Revolution, Tanya Matthews —born Tanya Svetlova—met more adventure than the average American sees in a lifetime. Here's how collectivization, revolts, prisoners, black markets, and purgings affect the life of an ordinary citizen. A plain, non-political recital of "just what happened," this is the inside story of life in Russia that Americans have been waiting for. **$3.50**

A NEW BOOK — *for your teen-agers*

TWO'S COMPANY

by BETTY CAVANNA

Present-day Williamsburg is the background for this very human story of impulsive young Claire Farrell; architect Phillip Young, employed on the Restoration of the Colonial town; and a young actor who has a role in "The Common Glory," a play presented there. Claire comes to her grandparents' home in Williamsburg and gets involved in pros and cons of the Restoration. She learns the proper values of American traditions, gains new respect for other people's ideas and finds out something about her own heart as well. **$2.50**

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